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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . . Page 197
REORIENTATIONS: DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM . 199
THE SPEED OF BUILDING 200
LONDONDERRY AIR. By Sagittarius . . . 200
A LONDON DIARY. By Polycritic . . . 201
RUSSIA HARDENS 202
SMALL WORLD FOR BIG. By Kingsley Martin. 202
THE NEOPOLITANS. By Desmond Shawe-Taylor 203
IN THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR. By Alexander Blok (translated by Frances Cornford) . . . 204
PLAYS AND PICTURES. By Stephen Potter and Siriol Hugh Jones 204
RADIO NOTES. By J. V. Ste-Maxime . . 205
THE MOVIES. By Norman MacKenzie . . 205
CORRESPONDENCE 206
From J. Downie; Kenneth Ingram; Arthur Sudbery; J. A. Roncoroni; George Reavey; J. M. Burnett; A. H. Hughes; John Morris; J. P. Mayer; and others.
BOOK IN GENERAL. By Raymond Mortimer Page 209
REVIEWS:
  Prisoner in the East. By Graham Hough . 210
  A French Composer. By Lionel Cranfield . 210
  The Colonies To-day. By W. M. Macmillan 211
  Cats. By Ralph Partridge 212
  The Economists on War and Peace. By G. D. H. Cole. 213
  Shorter Notice 213
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 213

FLOODGATE OF FLAPDOODLE

A FOREIGNER, dependent for information about Britain on the columns of the British press, must have derived during the past ten days a curious impression of conditions in this country. He would have read of squatters "besieged" in occupied mansions and blocks of flats, of their sympathisers being dispersed by mounted constabulary, and of the "mobilisation" of the last reserves of Scotland Yard's political police to combat an "ugly" movement to which popular newspapers gave the tribute of sensational headlines in the biggest type. Rubbing his eyes, he would have gone on to read of the discovery by the Conservative Party's weekly journal of a plot to overthrow the Government; of the Minister of Health's counter-offensive in the form of a circular instruction to local authorities that all communal services must be cut off from the squatters; and of the significant emphasis laid by the bulk of the press on the need for strong action and a firm hand, and even for a revision of the Law to fortify the defences of private property against trespass. He might be pardoned if he drew the conclusion that things in Britain were coming to a pretty pass; and his apprehensions lest Britain were on the point of being engulfed in Red ruin would probably be increased when he observed that the alarmed property owners' tocsin was being sounded not merely by the Tory Press Barons but even in the staid columns of *Time and Tide*, whose "independent non-party" interpretation of the extension of squatting from camps to unoccupied private buildings was that these were the "correct tactics of the Marxian revolutionists."

With charges for "criminal conspiracy" pending against five members of the Communist Party, it would be improper to comment on the legality or otherwise of organising the "luxury squatting." The Government has described the movement as "unlawful"; and the Court has granted an injunction against the London squatters. Clearly the law governing trespass—to say nothing of "forcible entry" and "forcible detainer"—is fully adequate to defend property owners' rights, quite apart from the blanket powers of the police to prevent actions liable to lead to "breaches of the peace." So why give the impression that the floodgate of anarchy has been opened, or is in serious danger of being opened, in Britain? Unless we were to believe that the Executive of the Communist Party has suddenly been converted to the doctrines of anarcho-syndicalism, or that a few hundred squatters (of whom a high proportion consists of women with babies) were preparing seriously to stand, feeding-bottles in their fists, behind the barricades, this Red scare was ludicrous. What has been opened is the floodgate of newspaper flapdoodle.

The squatters are accused of interfering with the orderly allocation of housing accommodation by the local authorities, with seeking to divert labour to their own needs and thus to disorganise the whole housing programme, and with behaving like a greedy woman who jumps the queue and helps herself without payment to a pound of rationed butter. There is some force in these arguments. There would be more if the butter in the Kensington squatters' case were a rationed article and not one available only to the rich. Moreover, building labour, far from being fully employed on essential work for those most in need, is notoriously being used in black market jobs and in well-to-do repairs and improvements for which licences are being granted on the basis of highly questionable necessity. Finally, many local authorities have done much less than they could to provide by requisitioning temporary accommodation which might at least have mitigated the hardships against which homeless people are now revolting.

Only by the building of new permanent houses can the present housing crisis be finally solved; and, as we point out in an article on a later page, application of added incentives will be required if the present snail's progress of the building industry is to be adequately speeded up. As an interim solution, however, much can be done by improvisation without extravagant diversion of labour from purposes of high priority. The Government is right to insist that no individual or political party can be allowed to arrogate to himself or itself the right to decide who is to occupy such and such a dwelling. If private property is to be requisitioned (and we would remind the Minister of Works that this was done with scant respect for vested interests under the compelling impulse of war), it must be carried out by the proper authorities. But when the local authority, as too often happens, fails to use its powers, and when homeless people see dwellings, requisitioned or derequisitioned, lying empty or under-occupied, squatting is bound to occur—law or no law. It will not be prevented by exploiting prejudice against the Communists; nor will the cause of democratic Socialism be advanced by assisting the Communists to achieve front-page martyrdom. If it is well advised, the Government will accept the fact that the Communists have canalised a spontaneous movement into a dramatic protest which has gone off with typical British good humour and lack of disorder. It should be a spur to action.

Adriatic Danzig

As we forecast, the so far inconclusive wrangle in the Trieste Sub-Commission of the Peace Conference is turning more and more on the status and powers of the Governor. The proposal by the Anglo-American Bloc that the Governor should enjoy comprehensive rights to veto legislation by the Assembly, and that the Security Council should have large powers of intervention, is regarded by the Russian Bloc as a cover for a design to maintain indefinitely a British and American military garrison in the Free Territory; and these suspicions have hardened the Yugoslav delegation's opposition to the (as they see it, strategically disadvantageous) frontier line proposed by the French. Reports are current in Paris that, with the arrival on the scene of Signor Reale, Communist member of the Italian delegation, results may be achieved in the direct Italo-Yugoslav negotiations which were tentatively begun a week or more ago. It is believed that Signor de Gasperi (influenced, it is said, by the attitude of Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bevin) frowned originally on these direct talks. But with the resignation of his conservative Finance Minister, and rumours of a fusion between the big business Liberal Party and the semi-Fascist *L'Uomo Qualunque* movement, the Italian Premier has troubles of his own at home. If Signor Reale and Mr. Bebler can reach an agreement, even at the cost of Italian concessions to Yugoslavia, the Italian Government may well decide that an accord freely endorsed by Belgrade is better than a deadlock or a solution imposed, and precariously guaranteed, by the Security Council.

Minorities in Slovakia

The Political Commission of the Peace Conference dealing with Czechoslovak demands and Hungarian claims in relation to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia has been making heavy weather. None the less, reports which reach us from Paris suggest that there are fair prospects of the Governments in Prague and Budapest profiting by the example shown by Italy and Austria in the case of the South Tyrol, and reaching an accord by direct negotiations outside the Conference. The scheme now believed to be under consideration would provide for the repatriation to Hungary of the greater part of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia; and, in addition, three villages on the southern bank of the Danube, opposite Bratislava, would be ceded to the Czechs. In exchange, Hungary would obtain an "ethnical" readjustment of her frontier without detriment to the economic interests of Czechoslovakia. In particular, the large Danubian island of Csallokoz, which has over a hundred thousand Magyar inhabitants, would be incorporated in Hungary. We should regard this as a sensible compromise solution.

Egyptian Manoeuvres

The "breakdown" a month ago in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty talks was staged by Sidky Pasha when he realised that he could not "sell" the British terms to his own delegation, and that opposition to him in the country was becoming dangerous. His tactics have been to share office with some of the malcontents. Four Saadist Ministers, representing the largest Parliamentary group, and one which has hitherto observed a certain neutrality towards Sidky, have joined the Government. The purpose is clear. A determined attempt will now be made to accept the substance of the British terms, and to have the decision endorsed by the Parliament—packed, corrupt and boycotted by the Wafd—which was set up after the dismissal of Nahas Pasha two years ago. A singular Royal sea-voyage preceded the recomposition of the Cabinet. On September 8th King Faruk's yacht turned up at Mersin, in Turkey. Three days later, Sidky told the Press that the King had ordered him to fly to Rhodes to meet him. The meeting was immediately followed by the announcement of the new Government. The incident not merely shows the dominant part played by the Palace in Egyptian political life to-day. Faruk's Turkish excursion may foreshadow a change in Egyptian policy within the Arab League. The Palace has hitherto backed the persistent refusal of Azzam Pasha to have anything to do with a Turkish-Arab Bloc on the lines of the Saadabad Pact. For four months, the Arab extreme Right has been working for a closer Arab-Turkish tie-up. Nuri al Said, former Iraqi Foreign Minister and leading exponent both of the Greater Syria plan and of Arab-Turkish united action against Kurdish separatism, and Anglophil Mardam Bey of Syria have both recently become strong rivals of Azzam for the post of General Secretary of the League. The likeliest explanation of Faruk's visit to Turkey is that the Palace has accepted the necessity for closer collaboration with Turkey.

The Turkish Government Press has for some time been urging that the Egyptian negotiations be speedily concluded, as a general settlement in Turkey's rear between the Arabs and Britain would strengthen its own position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. From Britain's standpoint, the question is whether a treaty signed with the Egypt of Faruk and Sidky, of Aly Maher and the Muslim Brotherhood, will be worth anything.

The Palestine Conference

If Mr. Bevin last May had displayed a fraction of his present anxiety to consult the Jewish Agency, the tragedy of Palestine would have been avoided. Since he took office, not a single discussion between the Government and the Agency on the substance of the Jewish claims has taken place; and the present conversations in London and Paris are still strictly confined to procedure. Even here, though a formula has been found which enables the Jews to attend, the crucial problem of the membership of the Jewish Agency delegation has not yet been solved. Mr. Bevin seems determined to exclude the four members now in Latrun, including Mr. Shertok, as well as Mr. Ben Gurion, who only escaped detention because he was outside Palestine. This is very shortsighted. Every Arab who really represents Arab feeling in Palestine was detained throughout the war, and the most representative Jews to-day are also "extremists." To obtain the consent of a few moderates to a compromise rejected by the masses would achieve nothing—as the moderates on both sides very well know. Mr. Bevin would be wiser to leave Jews and Arabs completely free to select their own delegations.

German Local Elections

The first elections in the British Zone were local and confined to agricultural areas. For this reason, and because the voting system is complicated, no very clear political conclusions can be drawn. It is noteworthy, however, that whereas the best informed observers had expected a Social-Democrat majority, and scarcely recognised the existence of Independents, a very large number of Independents were elected. This probably means that the voter had decided to select the best men for local government, and deliberately refused to turn the election into a plebiscite on national and international issues. In the predominantly agricultural and Catholic areas of the French Zone the Christian Democrats registered their anticipated success. Meanwhile, the victory of the United Socialists in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg confirms the earlier impression that land reform in the Russian Zone has been a genuinely popular measure. The solid basis of support for the United Socialists has shifted from the industrial areas to the countryside.

Reactionaries in Hungary

At the cost of a painful deflation, involving some temporary unemployment, Hungary has re-established a stable currency; but stability in the political field has clearly yet to be achieved. The Left parties, writes a Budapest correspondent, are bitter at the evident reluctance of the Smallholders' Party to frown on propaganda conducted by counter-revolutionary elements in their ranks. The country is flooded with reactionary talk and rumours. Ex-Fascists claim that they have British and American support; and, baseless though these claims may be, news from the British Zone of Austria that Hungarian Nazi organisers, such as Col. Derföldy, Ferenc Somogyi, and the actor Torogonyi are allowed to run the theatre of the Hungarian prisoners-of-war camp, has caused a bad impression. Another claim of the counter-revolutionaries is that they have the backing of the Catholic Church. The Cardinal Primate, Mindszenty, has indeed done his best to organise a crusade against the Government's land-reform programme, which resulted in the parcelling-out of the big estates of the Bishops. The Church, however, is not united in its attitude; not merely is there a growing tendency among parish priests to urge the need for a truce between Church and State, but certain of the leaders of the Church, such as the Archbishop of Eger and Bishop Dudas are believed to be in opposition to the Cardinal Primate's policy.

Catholic Split in France

The concluding stages of the Assembly's debate on the second draft of a French Constitution have been accompanied by signs of a split in the French Catholic ranks. In the Assembly, the M.R.P. has not concealed its dislike of some clauses in the draft, but has decided that, if it were to vote against it, it would be blamed for prolonging the present unsatisfactory "provisional" situation and would be placed in a position of embarrassing political isolation. In these circumstances, a new Party has appeared on the scene. Formed by M. René Capitant and other loyal adherents of General de Gaulle, the *Union Gaulliste* announces that it will ask its adherents to vote against the Constitution in the Referendum, and that it may run candidates in the subsequent general election, with the General's "Bayeux Constitution" and strong powers for the Executive as their platform. It remains to be seen what proportion of the Right Wing of the M.R.P. will join the Union; but the Left in France should profit from having M. Bidault and the Gaullists thus taking stands on opposite sides of the barricade.

The Argentine Agreement

The last-minute trade agreement with Argentina was reached only after considerable concessions by the British delegation. But neither side was really in a position to allow the discussions to fail completely. The settlement on the blocked Argentine balances in London is more favourable to Britain than Argentina at first seemed willing to concede. Ten millions are to be transferred to Brazilian account; five millions are to be released annually to Argentina over the next four years in addition to free convertibility of all future trading credits in sterling. On the still-blocked remainder Britain will pay interest of one half per cent., but it may be used for the repatriation of various categories of Argentine debts to Britain. The meat contract is likely to be a greater headache to Mr. Dalton than anyone else. While Britain in future is to take only three-quarters of Argentina's exportable surplus, prices are to be brought progressively up to the world market level. If the cost of living is to be kept steady, this will involve larger food subsidies in the Budget. The British-owned railways, long a source of friction, are to pass under the control of a mixed company—which the Argentine Government will be entitled to buy out—with guaranteed dividends to stockholders. Fresh capital for rehabilitation of the lines is being provided by the Argentine Government. It is not yet clear how well the British investor will fare; for the value of the British share in the new company has yet to be fixed by negotiation.

German Prisoners of War

The long-awaited scheme for the repatriation of German prisoners of war is a sensible compromise between the demands of justice and the requirements of the Minister of Agriculture. The proposed system of priorities is fair enough, though prisoners whose families are homeless refugees from the Russian Zone, in urgent need of support, may in many cases have a far stronger case for quick repatriation than some so-called "Whites" whose screening has often been scrappy. It must also be observed that, at the rate of 15,000 a month, it will be nearly three years before the last batch sails for home. However, the important thing was that a definite plan should be announced; and it was probably wise to limit our promises in the first instance to what can certainly be accomplished, and to accelerate the flow at a later date.

The Shortage of Recruits

It is not in the least surprising that the armed forces are short of recruits in spite of Field-Marshal Montgomery's recent announcements of less restrictions and galling conditions of army service, or even that the shortage of recruits extends to the R.A.F. as well as to the army. Recruitment under the voluntary system always depended on unemployment, and it was absurd to expect that the same level would be maintained in face of an acute shortage of man-power for civilian jobs. It was even more absurd to expect a high rate of recruitment just now, when the desire to get out of uniform is widespread and the very young men are due to be called up in any case. The question that arises is what ought to be done if the armed Services secure by voluntary enlistment a good many fewer recruits than they have bargained for. The answer now being given in some quarters, that the period of compulsory service will have to be lengthened, is simply unacceptable: the period is too long already, and will have to be shortened before long if both education and industry are not to be seriously damaged. The only reasonable answer is that we must make do with fewer men in uniform than the Service chiefs would like to have, and that, to the extent to which this involves a cut in our overseas commitments, commitments must be cut. There are narrow limits to the numbers who can be spared from the vital tasks of production for export and for home consumption.

Newsprint and Circulations

On Monday, British daily and Sunday newspapers obtain an increased ration of newsprint. This will permit the mass-circulation dailies to increase their size from four pages, as at present, to an average of five pages a day. Restrictions will also be loosened on the number of copies printed. Distribution to newsagents on "sale or return" will still not be allowed; but all firm orders can in future be met. A pamphlet by Sir Walter Layton, Chairman of the Newsprint Rationing Committee, brings out clearly the extent to which the war cut into the British newspaper industry's raw material supplies. This year, British newsprint consumption will amount to little more than fifteen lbs. a head of the population, against America's fifty-nine lbs. According to Sir Walter, newspapers have little hope of restoring their pre-war size; and most newspaper readers will agree with him that no good purpose would be served by going back to 24-page papers stuffed with display advertising and otiose "features." What the industry apparently aims at is to reach an eight-page basis in 1948 and a twelve-page basis by 1950. Whether this aim will be achieved depends partly on world supplies of newsprint and British supplies of dollars, partly on the extent to which increased circulations absorb paper. It is a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding rationing, the circulation of daily newspapers (mornings and evenings) has increased, according to *The Times*, from about 19,000,000 before the war, to over 25,000,000 this summer. Evidently many households which were content with a single newspaper before the war, have now got in the habit of buying several, either to get a cross-check on the news, or because the woman of the house is not prepared to wait until her husband brings his paper home from work.

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REORIENTATIONS: Democratic Socialism

PERHAPS the most striking feature of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy during the past year has been his ostentatious disregard of foreign Socialist Parties. He has obviously felt it important to show that a Labour Foreign Secretary can put aside his ideological prejudices and concern himself exclusively with "non-political" national interests. But, in this respect, foreign affairs do not differ from domestic. Non-political has been for a generation a word used to describe the *status quo*, and to disregard ideology means simply to carry on the policy of your permanent officials. At home, the Government is carrying out a Socialist programme which brings it into ever sharper conflict with "non-political" capitalists. It does not even think of asking for the expert advice of those opposed to its principles, before framing a King's speech. It firmly lays down the blue-print of its reforms, and orders the civil servants, whether they agree with the principles or not, to prepare the specifications.

In foreign relations, however, the Government has adopted an entirely different procedure. No firm directive on the general principles of Labour policy has been given. Instead, the Cabinet has extemporised on each issue as it came up, and accepted the advice of men whose whole tradition is opposed to democratic Socialism, and whose one fixed and obsessive idea is that civilization must be defended against the Communist menace. Suppose that Mr. Shinwell, before deciding in principle on the nationalization of the mines, had gone to the non-political coal magnates and asked them for their strictly impartial opinion; or suppose that Mr. Bevan had sought the advice of the building industry before he decided the cardinal issue of whether the housing programme should be run through the local authorities or through private enterprise. We all know that in domestic affairs such a course of action would compromise the whole Socialist programme. Yet, when Mr. Bevin considers the Palestine issue on which the Party has formulated a policy, he submits that policy to the Chiefs of Staff and to the Middle Eastern Department of the Foreign Office; and when they reverse the Party decision, he regards this merely as bowing to expert knowledge. A similar process has taken place in the formulation of Labour policy towards Greece, Spain and Germany. Instead of deciding on a policy first, and then instructing the permanent officials of the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff to work this policy out, the views of the "non-political" experts have been accepted on the policy itself—with the inevitable result.

There is, of course, an important difference between domestic and external affairs. Foreign policy cannot be planned with anything like the same precision as a programme of internal reconstruction, since most of the factors with which it is concerned, are outside British control. It is also true that whereas a Labour Government can, on the basis of a popular mandate, reverse domestic commitments entered into by previous governments, this is far more difficult to accomplish in external affairs, particularly when the leading members of the Government are personally committed to most of them by their participation in the Coalition War Cabinet.

All this is constantly urged by Mr. Bevin's apologists in defence of the Government's policy towards Palestine, Greece, and Spain. For some months after his entry into office, the excuses were plausible, but it is now clear enough that the Cabinet is not prevented from doing what it really wants by previous commitments, but passionately convinced that the Coalition policy was right. At home it is genuinely seeking a middle way between capitalism and Communist planning; abroad, it is accepting the sharp alternatives of a world ruled by America and a world ruled by Russia, and is aligning the British Commonwealth with the former. By ostentatiously cold-shouldering those governments and parties which were our former friends, and accepting assistance from every interest ready to assist in checking Russian expansion, we have drifted into a situation where the policy of a Labour Government is indistinguishable from and subordinated to the policy of American big business.

The result has been a crushing disillusionment of democratic Socialist forces throughout the world. Everywhere democrats and liberals, before the Labour victory, were confronted with the bleak alternatives of accepting either American or Russian suzerainty. When Labour came to power they were confident that a new possibility would be presented, and that British Socialist policy, in domestic and in external affairs, would demonstrate that the world had not got to choose between two things which most peoples would avoid if they could—American and Russian domination.

No one should underrate the extraordinary difficulties with which the Labour Government has been confronted. Whatever it does cannot change the fact that the only two Powers capable of waging and surviving atomic war are capitalist America and Soviet Russia. The natural drift, therefore, in world politics must be towards a division into two geo-political regions in which the prevailing ideologies will tend to drive out or to mop up the forces which stand for a middle way. Czechoslovakia, for instance, is a democratic Socialist country, but she must accept the consequences of membership of the Russian bloc. In China, if the internal forces were left to themselves, the chances of the emergence of a middle way, based partly on the co-operatives, would be very great. But in the present conflict between America and Russia China is compelled to choose between reaction and Communism. To assert a positive Socialist policy, therefore, is to go slap against the natural tendencies of power politics.

Any country is prepared to throw overboard its social programme when national survival is at stake. If the choice is really guns or butter, every country chooses guns; and Great Britain, if survival really depended on the armed defeat of Russian expansion, would no doubt make the same choice. We should certainly sacrifice our Socialism, and we should probably sacrifice our democracy as well. But we have argued in the two previous articles in this series that this is not the choice which confronts Great Britain. Even from considerations of national self-interest, it is vital to avoid committing ourselves to either Bloc. National survival depends on reversing the present tendency of world politics. We must seek to prevent the domination of the world by either Russia or America, and the world war which will almost certainly result from the attempt of either to achieve world domination. But the only way to prevent the drift towards two world Blocs is to demonstrate that democratic Socialism is a genuine middle way between the two paramount ideologies. The strengthening and spread of democratic Socialism is to-day a vital British interest.

The central task, therefore, of British foreign policy is not merely the negative one of avoiding commitment to either Bloc. Neutrality of this sort may be possible for Switzerland; it is impossible for the British Commonwealth, and indeed for the British Isles, which cannot hope to survive merely by standing aside and crying "a plague on both your houses." Our aim must be positive, to encourage democratic Socialism wherever we can, but particularly in areas where our influence can be decisive. In some cases, as in India, where the Government's policy, whatever its final success, has been genuinely Socialist, our aim must be to wind up British imperialism and cut our commitments. But in others, we have a positive and continuous function to perform.

The key to the European situation is in France. The purely negative attitude of the opposition to Communism, adopted by the Government, has only resulted in strengthening the Communists, weakening the Socialists and bringing France nearer to civil war. Here our positive aim should be to formulate a basis of understanding between the two countries on such issues as Germany and Spain, which a French Socialist can recognise as Socialist, and which a French Communist can only oppose at the risk of splitting his own Party. By ostentatiously tolerating Franco and by permitting Mr. Byrnes to take the lead in formulating Western policy towards Germany, we have endangered Franco-British relations and the future of democratic Socialism in France.

No one will dispute that the future of Germany is a vital British interest, whereas it is only of secondary importance to the U.S.A. An attempt to restore free enterprise and Weimar democracy in Germany would ensure the ultimate victory of Communism in Europe, and leave these islands defenceless in an American-Russian conflict. Yet no serious effort whatsoever has been made during the last fourteen months to formulate a British policy towards Germany, which in contrast with the American, puts forward a democratic planned economy which could integrate German industry into the life of Europe. This should have been one of the primary tasks of Labour policy, and by now, under vigorous leadership, the British Zone could have become the living demonstration of the Socialist middle way. The British Zone is now a living example of the futile attempt to maintain the *status quo* under a bastard type of colonial administration.

The failure in Germany is all the more tragic because here there was a reasonable chance of persuading capitalist America to accept a British Socialist lead. After their wartime experiences, the Americans are well aware of their ineptitude in handling European peoples, and the profits to be made out of Germany are not great enough to produce a pressure group in the States in favour of opening up Germany to American business enterprise. If Mr. Bevin, in consultation with France and Germany's other Western neighbours, had formulated a constructive Socialist policy for Germany, he might well have persuaded the Americans to fall into line, and thereby created the basis for a reconstruction of Western Germany, so successful that the Russians would have been compelled, in their own interests, to accept the principles on which it was based as valid for the whole of Germany. But now we are faced with a situation where, if the American lead is followed by Britain, the British Zone will be integrated into an American Zone, run on reactionary political and economic lines, and the division of Germany between the two opposing world Blocs will be rendered permanent.

The situation in the Middle East is similar. Here again there was the possibility for a Labour Government to reverse British policy by deliberately encouraging progressive movements amongst the Arabs. The reverse has happened. In every Arab country reactionary governments, under British tutelage, are busily destroying the inexperienced and backward Left-wing forces, while in Palestine Mr. Bevin's policy has been even more reactionary than that of the Americans. Instead of compelling America to accept a constructive British lead, which might lead to a genuine Arab democracy, we are attempting to create an anti-Bolshevik bloc and forcing every progressive Arab to look to Russia for assistance. We have increased the danger of Communism by this short-sighted effort to oppose it.

The conclusion is clear enough. The attempt to build a Socialist State in Great Britain which should form part of an American Bloc, is doomed to failure. In the war which would inevitably follow, we should have to sacrifice our Socialism and our democracy as well. The Labour Government in Britain can only survive if democratic Socialism is firmly established in Western Europe, including Germany, and if the rest of the world is thereby given proof that there is indeed a " third alternative " which it can choose. Morals and expediency alike demand that we practise Socialism abroad as well as at home.

THE SPEED OF BUILDING

There is little chance that, by the end of the year, the target of one hundred thousand permanent houses will have been reached. This figure, announced by Mr. Tomlinson and not confirmed by Mr. Bevan, was based upon plans already passed by Whitehall and upon a survey of sites on which work was under way earlier in the year. It was then assumed that the construction of permanent dwellings would proceed at a fairly rapid rate, calculated from the average time which elapses between acceptance of tenders and the completion of a house. It is now pretty obvious that houses are not, in fact, going up at anything like the rate expected, and that work on council schemes has been delayed by something much more serious than administrative incapacity or shortages of essential components.

The Ministry of Health, indeed, and the other Departments associated with the housing programme have done their part of the job with considerable despatch. The paper work—ceilings for tenders, specifications and so forth—was completed sufficiently early to allow full use to be made of this year's building season. Responsibility for the failure to deliver the goods falls, in part, on local authorities which have failed to initiate schemes energetically, but—even more—on the building industry. The fact is that the rate of building is almost incredibly slow.

The industry can give a number of obvious explanations. In the first place, the supply of materials, from bricks to baths and guttering, has been uneven and subject to local variations. A certain quantity—though by no means as much as might be expected under a scheme of control which has been voluntarily imposed and operated by the builders' merchants—has been lost to illegal or authorised but needless work. Steps have recently been taken, however, both to expedite delivery of components and materials to priority work and to tighten up the leakage to pirate decorators.

Secondly, there is the problem of labour supply. While a state of virtual full employment exists in the building trade, the labour force will remain inflexible. There is little impetus to the mobility which would be necessary to provide a balanced supply of labour throughout the country. Serious shortages exist, moreover, in certain skilled trades. These can be met by training, but it will take time to achieve results. Meanwhile, regional arrangements have been made to control the use of building labour, but it is obvious that there are bound to be many cases where work is held up for lack of suitable labour at the right place and the right time.

The third problem is that of licensing. Some councils have undoubtedly viewed their powers more liberally than others, and contractors have found ways of getting round regulations where it suited them. But as repair and renovation work increasingly gives place to the erection of new homes, this difficulty will diminish in importance.

All these obstacles are of a type that could be expected in the aftermath of war. But taken together they do not begin to explain the slow rate of construction. Anyone can see that if, on an average throughout the country, bricklayers put down only forty bricks an hour compared to a pre-war average of about eighty, the whole rate of building is at once cut in half. And, at present, it is not merely bricklayers who are not working to full capacity, but many other trades. In the building industry the tradition of " making the work go round " dies hard. When materials are in erratic supply, men find their work disorganised and tend to go slow whenever there appears to be the beginnings of a shortage. The whole industry is suffering from a " scarcity-complex " which is constantly slowing it down. This is the main reason why so few houses have been completed this year.

Even more disturbing is the fact that houses for sale are going up far more quickly than those for letting by local authorities. This discrepancy is at the bottom of the failure to reach the target blurted out by Mr. Tomlinson. It is common knowledge that many builders, working on private houses, offer bonuses to the men for quick work, although this is often a violation of Regulation 56A.B., accepted by both employers and trade unions. It was designed to avoid the very situation which has now arisen. In fact, it is providing an incentive for " go slow " on council work and speed up on houses for sale. Thus it directly sabotages the Government's housing programme.

Would it not be better for the Government to accept the situation, annul the Defence Regulation discouraging bonuses, and encourage a bonus system which could apply to council schemes? The present illegal bonus on houses for sale cannot be stamped out, since employers and workers both connive at it for the sake of its advantages. Whatever the basis on which such a scheme was worked out, whether applying to the particular job, the house or a whole housing scheme, a wage system which provides an incentive to complete work as rapidly as possible must produce increased efficiency. There would be little point in a Treasury objection that it is useless paring down tenders if more money is to be spent in bonuses. At present, money is wasted paying men on a time rate for work which is continually and deliberately delayed by masters and men alike.

Attempts to introduce any kind of piece-work are not popular in the building trade. There are obvious difficulties in preparing a wages system which takes fair account of the differences between trades and difficulties imposed by circumstances outside the control of the workmen themselves, such as weather and material shortages. But it should be possible to work out a combination of a basic time-rate—perhaps there is a case for the full guaranteed week—with a bonus system. It has been done in other trades with as complicated a craft structure. There is little point in lecturing the men or grumbling about illegalities if such exhortations fail to get the houses built. The Government's primary job is to get the houses, and unless it is ready to put pressure on the industry to put its own house in order and face the question of incentives there is little point in clearing bottlenecks in the supply of materials or in the administrative machine. Speed is now the essence of the housing problem; but the industry still believes in ca'canny.

LONDONDERRY AIR

> Seen in its proper perspective, frontier bombing is not the inhuman and barbarous method of control which some of its critics would have the world believe.—*The Times*, September 17th.

When low-level bombing of tribesmen was planned
By a high-level Tory directive,
The Socialist theorists could not command
The sweep of the broader perspective.

North-west operations, when seen as a whole,
Are found to be purely protective,
When the troublesome problem of Frontier control
Fits into the general perspective.

Not the raid but the aim, not the means but the end,
Not the blitz but the long-term objective—
The right to subdue and the call to defend
Sustain the Imperial perspective.

Though punitive, bombing is made too humane
To be ever completely effective—
For even the bombers in action maintain
Their sense of the wider perspective.

The right to bomb tribesmen is part of our trust,
Its purpose is clearly corrective,
And Socialist leaders have learned to adjust
Their formerly faulty perspective.

North-West operations are plainly no case
For ideologic invective
And the bombing of villages falls into place
When seen in its proper perspective.

Sagittarius

A LONDON DIARY

Most of the comments on Mr. Wallace's speech seem to me to have missed the point that he is the only potential Presidential candidate who can rally organised labour and liberal opinion in support of the Democratic Party. By asking for his resignation Mr. Truman would ensure a Republican victory next November. Mr. Wallace is a shrewd politician who knows his own power. For many months, with a nonentity in the White House, he has been fighting Mr. Byrnes for control of the Democratic Party, and he has very deliberately selected foreign policy as the issue on which to make his stand. At first the battle remained inside the Cabinet. After Mr. Byrnes had given his support to the Morrison plan for Palestine, Mr. Wallace led the opposition to it in the Cabinet and persuaded the President to overrule the Secretary of State by turning the plan down. Round one to Mr. Wallace. Now he has come out into the open on the general question whether America should "defend the British Empire" in an effort to create an anti-Bolshevik bloc. His case is a popular one. For some time the oil interests, with the support of the Service Chiefs, have been arguing that, in view of America's dwindling oil resources, the Middle East is now a vital interest to the U.S.A.; and that the best way of safeguarding the American oilfields in Saudi Arabia, and obtaining a share in the new oilfields of Southern Iraq, which are believed to be the richest in the world, is to back British imperialism. Immediately they want a showdown with Russia on the Dardanelles. This policy is now being put across by a number of important journalists. In last week's *Sunday Chronicle*, for instance, Mr. Walter Lippmann argued that the Dardanelles should be made the supreme test in the struggle for power between Russia and the Anglo-American Bloc, though he frankly admitted the appalling risks involved. Mr. Joe Alsop, one of the best columnists in America and very close to Admiral Leahy, has been taking a similar line in his despatches from Europe. Mr. Wallace, who is not bound by any rules of Cabinet responsibility, has now deliberately forced the issue, and compelled Mr. Truman to choose between Mr. Byrnes and himself.

* * *

Mr. Wallace, of course, is chiefly concerned with American opinion. And his arraignment of Mr. Byrnes as the stooge of British imperialism is good demagogy, though at the moment patently untrue. The boot is on the other foot. Unfortunately, by introducing this argument in his attack on the State Department, he has largely nullified the effect of his speech over here. How different it would have sounded if he had made a positive appeal to Mr. Attlee to put his Labour principles into practice in foreign affairs as well as at home. But this does not affect the speech's significance; it is a warning that the Bevin-Byrnes policy will be supported by our bitterest enemies in America and opposed by liberal opinion and organised Labour. To write of Mr. Wallace's speech as though it were anti-British is ridiculous. He is one of the very few real friends of Britain and of British Labour in American politics, and he was attacking, not Britain, but a line-up of American Big Business and our Foreign Office which he regards as fatal to both our countries and to world peace. If Cabinet Ministers here could speak their private thoughts in public with the same freedom as Mr. Wallace, I could think of at least three who would not dissent from his onslaught on the Byrnes-Bevin line.

* * *

I have recently been talking to two friends, just returned from lengthy periods of service in Munich and Berlin. The first told me that the most remarkable development in Bavaria has been the trek of skilled workers, army officers and managers into the Russian Zone, where they are offered secure employment and special rations. Many of the jobs, my friend says, are in German armament factories such as Junkers at Dessau, which is now working twenty-four hours a day for the Russians. I was inclined to discount this story until my other friend told me that just before he left Berlin he had actually read a letter which a German Socialist had received through the post from the Russian Zone. It came from an old party comrade who had worked in a secret armament factory during the war. He wrote that all the old gang are now together again on secret work. As the war between East and West is inevitable and nothing they can do makes any difference, they see no harm in working for the Russians, especially as their living conditions are excellent and they receive 2,900 calories a week. "Slip over and join your old comrades," the letter ended. I have checked this story in London, and it is apparently true that the contrast between the full employment and the high rations for skilled workers in the Russian Zone and the unemployment and short rations of the West, is having its effect. Even Ruhr miners, despite their special rations, are now disappearing, while army officers and factory managers, who are forbidden to work in their old professions on our side, are offered jobs by the Russians. If this goes on, Western Germany will become the home of the aged, the crippled, the women and the children, while the young men with skill or professional abilities drift away to the East.

* * *

It is amusing to see how Sir Ernest Simon and Mr. Harold Macmillan interpret the current political situation in this country and, in particular, the functions of the Labour Party. Unimpressed apparently by the Liberal Party's decision to put 600 candidates into the field at the next general election, Sir Ernest throws in his lot with Labour. In so doing, he announces that he sees no purpose in a "balancing" centre party, and that he regards Labour in power with an effective majority as providing the best hope of successfully following "the double road of Socialism and democracy," and of continuing an orderly "revolution" whose "peaceful acceptance by the privileged classes" he regards as one of the greatest and most encouraging events in the history of Britain. In other words, Sir Ernest acclaims the Labour Party as being in tune with his own attitude of democratically-minded social reformism. Mr. Macmillan, a not unprogressively minded Tory, dissents fundamentally from this reading of the situation. In thinking aloud about a new "Democratic" party which is to unite all who are opposed to the "grim nightmare of the totalitarian state," he is apparently out to form an anti-Socialist bloc embracing Conservatives, Liberals and those members of the Labour Party who, he fondly imagines, are repelled by the Government's "doctrinaire extremism." No doubt he realises that the Conservative Party has little chance of ever again having power except by participating in a National Coalition. I don't quarrel with this estimate of Tory prospects. What I, like Sir Ernest Simon, fail to see, is the totalitarian menace of Mr. Attlee's administration. If Mr. Macmillan were advocating openly an anti-Communist front, he would be talking sense—up to a point; but I think he flatters Mr. Harry Pollitt in suggesting that his influence at this stage requires to be countered by a Front ranging from Colonel Blimp to Mr. Shinwell.

* * *

Peace has its curiosities. Last week-end, during a brief visit to Northumberland, I went to a horse show. The champion in the Grand Parade was led by a tough German grenadier from a neighbouring P.o.W. camp, nearly all of whose inmates are working on the farms around. The prisoners are popular locally, and have managed to pick up, fluently enough, Tyneside accent and idiom for purposes of conversation. The camp is guarded by Poles, to whom nobody will speak, and who are regarded by the local people as thieves and bandits. One farmer, in my hearing, said to a German prisoner who was with him at the show: "Can't you teach discipline to those Poles?" Incidentally, my postbag contains a number of letters from Poles who complain that the British Government has placed them in an invidious dilemma. If they refuse to join the Polish Resettlement Corps they forfeit all prospect of British help. But if they do join, they are committing themselves to serve what they describe as "a sentence of two years," under the most reactionary officers in the world.

* * *

Some weeks ago an article in this journal criticised the way in which films sponsored by the Government were often shelved on completion and were never seen by press or public. I hope this is not to be the fate of *The Bridge*, the excellent film about Yugoslavia which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. It was put into the hands of the Central Office of Information in May. Although the official explanation why we have not yet seen it is that the trade has so far not shown any interest, I understand that it was offered only to one renter, who was told it did not qualify as part of his quota. He has since been told that this was a mistake. But even if he will reconsider his decision, why was there no attempt to give the film a general trade show? We are told that the C.O.I. has to treat the trade gently and avoid any impression that it is trying to push a film. But this seems to mean, in practice, that very little is done to interest renters in good official documentaries.

* * *

I have always been a desultory collector of epitaphs from churchyards. I wish someone would tell me where the following lines that I learnt in childhood come from:

Here lies old Jones
Who all his life collected bones,
Till death, that grim and bony spectre,
That all-amassing bone-collector,
Boned Old Jones
So neat and tidy,
And here he lies in bone fide.

Julian Huxley sends me this wall-tablet, "obviously eighteenth-century but undated," which he copied in Tetbury Church:

In a Vault underneath lie several of the
SAUNDERS late of this parish—particulars
The last day will disclose
Amen.

Now I wonder who the Saunders were and why the fate of several of them was regarded with so much scepticism. POLYCRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Sidney D. Bailey.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Ex-Private Edward H. Denny was notified to-day that his claim for £93 travel and subsistence allowance has been finally approved.

He had been waiting since 1899, when he was discharged in the Philippines after serving in the Spanish-American war and had a difficult time getting home.—*Manchester Guardian.*

Aylesbury Council are offering for sale second-hand grave spaces.—*Evening News.*

The attendance register must be marked at the beginning of each morning or afternoon session during the time set apart from registration in the time table. During this time every pupil whose name has been entered in and not removed from the admission registers must be marked \ (present) or o (absent); (It is of course open to schools to make the marks from left to right or from right to left according to individual convenience.)—Extract from Ministry of Education Administrative Memorandum No. 48.

It was stated that Irons travelled from Haywards Heath to Brighton with a Preston Park ticket, and told the collector at Brighton: "I bit a piece out of the ticket because there was no ticket collector at Preston Park Station."—*Star.*

The Rev. D. G. Falconer, Vicar of Old Newton, near Ipswich, declared to-day that the wet weather was a "cleansing operation" after the war.

"I cannot follow those who argue that rainy harvests are a mark of Divine judgment for man's iniquities," he said.

"In the Divine mind, rain may have been necessary to counteract the injury that might have ensued as a result of the poisonous bombs poured upon English soil."—*Leicester Evening Mail.*

Grand Swimming Gala at the Hampstead Baths in aid of the Mayor's Flood Relief Fund for the relief of recent flood victims in Hampstead. Diving competitions and exhibitions of life-saving.—*Poster displayed in High Street, Hampstead.*

RUSSIA HARDENS

[BY OUR MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT]

ONE thing is completely certain: the Russians want the Peace Conference to succeed. As one of the people who accompanied Mr. Molotov during his brief visit to Moscow, said to me: "Do you imagine we would put up with all this nonsense (systematic Australian obstruction and all the rest of it) if we did not want the Conference to succeed?" I gathered that a recent NEW STATESMAN AND NATION editorial on the conflict between secret and open diplomacy had attracted much attention among the Russians in Paris, and they were inclined to agree with the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION's diagnosis why Paris was getting the worst of both worlds. My friend also said: "A lot of small nations in the Anglo-American bloc—for there is such a thing and you can't deny it—have been inclined to vote completely automatically, without judging each proposal on its own merits, and Mr. Molotov and Mr. Vyshinsky often have to make long speeches to defeat some proposal which has nothing in its favour, except that Americans like it." As a result, the Conference was being laborious in the extreme, and the Australians, with their "amendments for amendments sake," were not helping matters. Secondly, as the Russians see it, there is also this: the atom bomb has gone to the Americans' heads.

One has begun to hear war talk in Moscow, as one hears it everywhere else in Europe to-day. In fact, the Russian press in the last few weeks has been tending, if anything, to play it up. There was a great splash in *Pravda* of the speech reported to have been delivered by Mr. Messersmith, the American Ambassador to Buenos Ayres. He was credited with having said that he believed war to be inevitable between the United States and the Soviet Union; that thanks to the atom bomb the United States would save the world; and that he was expressing the point of view of the State Department. Reading this, many Russians that day rubbed their eyes; but they went on to read that Field-Marshal Montgomery was in Canada, urging the Canadians to prepare for the next war and talking of the strategic importance of the Canadian North—obviously not in a war against the Eskimos. There are a lot of other things the Russians don't like—American "non-intervention" in China, the attitude of "Mikado" MacArthur, the U.S. fleet in the Mediterranean and much else.

Until recently all these unpleasant things were being rather glossed over in the Russian press. Not so to-day. One cannot help feeling that many recent internal developments in Russia are directly or indirectly tied up with the international situation. There is no doubt that, from the Teheran Conference until the end of the war, or rather until Hiroshima, many Russians thought life would be fairly easy and simple after the Axis was beaten. Right through the twenty-nine years of the Soviet regime there have been relatively "soft" periods and relatively "hard" periods. Many Russians, not least the soldier returning home, were expecting a fairly "soft" period, with a lot of work, no doubt, to be done. Plays like Simonov's *So It Will Be*, produced early in 1945, foreshadowed a happy and fairly easy-going life after the war. I would not mention this quite unimportant play except that Simonov is a man who always has an ear well to the ground, and is acutely conscious of political trends in Russia; and Simonov at that time believed, not without good reason, that that was how people and indeed the Government were visualising post-war Russia.

Things have since turned out differently. And it is going to be a nice puzzle for future generations to decide "who started it?" The Russians will now say they were a thousand times right in being intransigeant from the start over their own security; for, as they gloomily observe: "There would have been this attempt at capitalist encirclement anyway, and it's just as well our Border States aren't taking part in it." Such is the international background of that great ideological drive we are witnessing now. A tremendous heightening of "Soviet consciousness" is demanded from everybody to-day. And the ideological drive doesn't concern culture and literature only. In industry there is a powerful drive for higher efficiency, for "Communist morality" and the eradication of bribery, corruption, toadying and other characteristics which are now described as "survivals of capitalist mentality and manners."

Much corruption did develop during the war, and a clean-up of this sort was to be expected. But what is new is that all these processes should be handled on a high political and ideological level. Everywhere Party activity is being immensely intensified. Ten million copies of *A Short History of the Communist Party* have been printed, and millions of copies of selected works of Lenin and Stalin. At a tank parade in Red Square, the Internationale was played not, it is true, as an anthem, but in the form of a marching tune. There is disillusionment about the outside world, and the idea that the Soviet Union is "essentially different" from the outside world isn't being discouraged—on the contrary.

Significant in this respect was a recent article by Professor Varga, who wrote:

> The fact that the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States found themselves in the same camp in the struggle against Nazi Germany meant merely that the struggle of the two systems inside the democratic camp had stopped for a time. It did not mean that this struggle was at an end. While helping the Soviet Union, the Allies never forgot the fundamental differences in their social systems. Their determination to keep the atom bomb secret is typical of this. Now the preservation of capitalism is the main object of capitalist countries.

Varga then dwells at length on what he considers a very important question—Communist Parties abroad. In Britain and America the bourgeoisie's prestige was not lowered by the war. In all the rest of Europe the bourgeoisie was totally discredited. In England and America the Communist Parties amount to very little, but in Europe they count for a lot. What is the Labour Party? Varga makes no bones about it. He says the Labour Party is a powerful auxiliary of the British bourgeoisie, and his article in fact reads almost like Lenin's old polemics with Kautsky and other reformist Social-Democrats. To Varga the Labour Party is the catspaw with which the British bourgeoisie are trying to split the working-class of Europe. Varga says there are five million Communists in France, nearly three million Communist voters in Czechoslovakia, a strong Communist Party in Italy, and a potentially powerful Communist Party in Germany. The Labour Party's aim is to "strengthen reformism in Germany, Italy, Hungary, and France; for reformist Socialists are the last hope of the British bourgeoisie." Schumacher is being built up by the British and, Varga exclaims, who are the people who have joined in this racket? The Socialists whom Hitler spared—Karl Severing, "Bloody" Noske, Paul Loebe, etc. And he concludes: "The whole future of capitalist countries depends on the outcome of this struggle for Social-Democracy and inside Social-Democracy." As for the Communist Parties, Varga says that they are in fact the backbone of Europe's new democracy. That is how he defines what he calls their "new role."

This is a good example of the ever growing tendency in Russia to return to the pure milk of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, while emphasising that what happened in the intervening period was tactically correct. But there is little doubt that the degree to which Russia abandons previous "interim" tactics and the extent to which she returns to an "orthodox" standpoint can be, and indeed is, determined by events outside her control. In other words, the maintenance of the Big Three principle would probably have resulted, for a long time anyway, in a different home policy in Russia. Now we have entered into one of the "hard" phases of Soviet history with ideological purity as the general rule. This applies to the interpretation of international events and also to almost everything inside the country.

(*To be concluded*)

SMALL WORLD FOR BIG

THE priest with the masterful and austere face who sat in the corner of the carriage put down the newspaper he had been reading and said: "And all this filth and evil counsel is defended by you in the name of the freedom of the press. Never were the wiles of the devil more successfully used to confuse the minds of men than when he blinded their eyes to the difference between liberty and licence. I read here of the degradation of your society, the disruption of family life, the preparation for war, the hatreds and wranglings of foreign ministers; of the sin of adultery and the sin of greed; of innocent sport debased by gambling; of theft and murder as everyday incidents. I read blasphemy against God and His Church defended with the sophistries of clever men for the confusion of uninstructed minds, and the corruption of little children. And all this display of social infamy has as its commentary your shameless advertising, designed by lascivious display to foster vanity, extravagance and every form of foolishness. The shame and wickedness of your society is painted not by servants of God calling you to repentance, but by hired menials of millionaires who pander to base appetites and excite evil passions, so that when they go to hell they will leave even more millions behind them."

The hard-bitten man sitting opposite, with the strained eyes that are the mark of those who have long looked through the barbed wire of concentration camps, said: "You are leaving out the object of all this muck and propaganda. The capitalist press is the new opium of the people. You want to substitute the religious dope of the past. I have seen your work in Spain and other countries where those who have knowledge, and wish to raise the people from a life of animal poverty, are killed or go to prison; where the priests wax fat and fake miracles to awe the starving village; where the Church works hand in glove with the rich landlords and the military caste, and a gang of venial officials will do the work of a Fascist master. This is even worse and more reactionary than the capitalist democracies, where at least the truths of Marx and Lenin are known and understood by a few. I have lived in a country where there are no advertisements such as you describe; where we educate the illiterate; where our newspapers are sold in millions to those who were downtrodden slaves before the revolution; where censorship is necessary, not to deceive but to protect the people against the lies of our enemies, and where the press and the radio and the cinema are controlled by the State in the interests of all. We shall be able to relax control when the people have learned the habits of common life, and we are no longer threatened by Fascists, Catholics, Capitalists and their fifth columnist dupes. As it is, we allow administrative criticism where it is good for efficiency, and we teach our people the scientific truths which help them to understand the greatness of our Socialist Republic, and inspire them to defend it against its enemies."

The man who sat in the third corner could not contain himself any longer. "That sort of boloney may be all right for a lot of ignorant Asiatics, though I very much doubt it. Let me tell you, Sir, that we in America believe in liberty, and the freedom of the press heads the list of the Ten American Freedoms. It is written in our Constitution, and no one can take it away. We believe that the common man has as much right to know the truth as the priest or the Commissar. I am a foreign correspondent, and I have been in Russia and told the American people as much as your censorship would allow me to. And I have been in Spain and other Catholic countries, too. And I don't like police States, even when they are run by the Church. Free enterprise is the life-blood of progress. Of course we had our slump and we have got poor people in the United States—negroes and poor whites amongst them. But every man has his chance, and if he can't become a newspaper owner he at least can find some newspaper to put his point of view, and to fight for his rights. And look where it's led us! Look at the American way of life, with a car for every family, an ice-box, and good food and fine-built towns and Sunday newspapers of a hundred pages. Why, there isn't anything happening in the world that the common man can't learn about from our newspapers, and if he isn't satisfied he can turn on the radio. What's the matter with smart advertisements with pictures of pretty girls? We believe the public should have what it wants, and it wants sex and excitement and not a lot of dull political propaganda which is all the Soviet newspapers give it. And we are only at the beginning of things. I have just been reading here the first part of a report of an American Commission—unofficial, mind you—on the freedom of the press, and it makes you open your eyes when you know that the American Army during the war developed a technique of transmitting news at the rate of eight hundred words a minute. We have got the 'media of mass communication,' as our United Nations experts call it. When we have got rid of the Communists and all the other trouble makers, American business can supply everybody throughout the whole world with exact information about what's happening in every other part of it within half an hour of its happening. I tell you that people haven't begun to understand what the United States is going to do. We will have a standard of living that will make your eyes open, and we will have modern knowledge about everything, provided at 5 cents a time with everyone's breakfast cereal. That's what freedom means. And we are going to see that everybody gets it."

As he paused for breath, the other man in the railway carriage looked up and said: "I am not a Catholic or a Communist or an American journalist. I am an observer of men and some call me a philosopher, though I claim no such noble title. I notice one thing about which you are all agreed. You all know that mankind must now move to One World; that otherwise we must destroy ourselves. And what you are really quarrelling about is who is to control the minds of men in the One World. Catholicism has the claims of antiquity and its two thousand years of experience in governing the minds of men. It knows that the impulses of men are often evil. I know that if Rome were to win in this struggle for world power, it would try again so to educate this vast mass of people that they would accept poverty, live according to its moral precepts in the traditional family circle, and not revolt against their rulers, who would have the benefit of modern knowledge and the luxury that is now possible for all. I do not believe that such a concept of world government is now possible or desirable. The new knowledge that began with Galileo has sunk too deep, and still it moves. And I do not think it desirable because men have had a higher vision than that conceived by Rome. The Communist is also guided by practical experience of government and a rational analysis of society. Just as Rome rules by the Christian myth, so the Communist hopes to substitute a myth which is more in accordance with scientific knowledge and more conducive to general happiness. Unfortunately this leads to the fanatical belief that all who do not accept it in its entirety are class enemies to be liquidated. If the Catholics continue their crusade against Communism, which in theory is a new form of universal Christianity, and the Communists cannot wait for their ideas to penetrate, but must attempt to ride roughshod over opposition abroad as well as at home, then we may have in the world neither Catholicism nor Communism, but primitive anarchy.

"Our American friend deceives himself in not admitting that, even in the greatest of capitalist democracies, someone in fact controls what he calls 'the media of mass communication.' His system has the advantage that there is criticism of government, and without criticism even a government that is pledged to the welfare of the people or to their religious salvation, must degenerate into a form of tyranny. But when he, too, talks of One World, one does not need to probe far to discover that it would mean the domination of Big Business, which owns ninety-nine per cent. of the American press, and all the American radio and cinema. Just because there is that elasticity which permits American business to talk of freedom, and to point to the Radicals and Communists who have their little say in backwaters, it rules America, and would rule One World, more effectively than the Communist and perhaps even more disastrously than the Catholic. For its method of rule is, as the priest has said, to pander to every lower passion and reduce men's minds by a process of perpetual distraction and titillation to an emptiness never known in the history of man. Our friend tells us he can provide mankind with all the news from every part of the world every morning. Would this make one happier, more able to judge, or more of a real person? If I say that no one would have the time to read or understand this vast bulk of matter, I am sure I shall be told that American business can also provide encyclopaedias and books of popular philosophy and science and history and geography and general knowledge to enable the common man to interpret the flood of information that fills his newspaper and drowns thought through the loudspeaker of his radio. A very little wisdom of the heart makes a man a better and a happier citizen than a man who has been educated in a free school and taught nothing of human life; who has been pushed through an examination system by crammers who do not themselves know why knowledge is important, and turned out as a technician, expert in mending some part of a complex machine devoted to pampering his body or further bewildering his mind.

"I live in a village; it does not matter where. It suffers less from propaganda than does any capital city that I have visited. Why? Because the people know about the affairs of their own town and have a reasonable understanding, too, of the position and significance of their own comparatively small and politically unimportant country. You see, such knowledge as they have is first-hand and not second, or third, or tenth hand. From Plato onwards many philosophers have dreamt of One World Utopias and seen no solution except through the control of men's minds by a universal myth.

"But that was because they dreamt of a static society involving a similarity of outlook for all mankind. One World we must have, and its danger, as our American friend so graphically described it, is that those in charge will have a power so monstrous that they will be tempted to mould us all into Roman Catholics or orthodox Communists or lovers of machines or worshippers at the shrine of Mammon. But all that will be necessary for world authority, if it is federal—and all governments are federal that are not tyrannous—will be to prevent men going to war and to control that basic organisation of world resources without which men will continue to starve in the midst of potential plenty. Given that, we need an infinite variety of ways of communicating with each other. And the variety must be obtained by making it impossible for men to make money out of exploiting weakness or destroying minds. I see newspapers without advertisements, and the radio and cinemas controlled by men who are disinterested, or rather interested only in art and education of the mind. I know that this does not solve the problem of ultimate authority. But it does, I believe, provide the key. Once they are properly organised the economics of the world can be totalitarian with no loss of liberty. We do not worry about our digestions if they run smoothly. Men will be able to turn their thoughts to other things. And their thoughts can be first-hand and not second-hand, because it is a supreme advantage of such a world as I have described that nationalism, which is now a menace both economically and politically, because it is expansive and aggressive, will become what it should be, the natural centre of cultural tradition. Such cultural nationalism can be as small as Montenegro or as large as Ireland or the United States, but the smaller the area in which an individual participates actively, the more free he will be from the menace of second-hand information and valueless news, and the better chance he will have to know what he is doing, to judge honestly and to live creatively."

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE NEAPOLITANS

THE company at Covent Garden is youthful, enthusiastic, gifted; uneven, extravagant, immature—which adjectives you prefer to stress is largely a matter of temperament. For my own part, irritation was outweighed by delight—above all, by the delightful sensation produced, after six years of British fog and phlegm, by the blessedly hot Italian sun. As the generous Verdi and Puccini melodies coursed through the packed house, delivered *à pleine voix* by singers to whom this music has been from their cradles at once the bread-and-butter and the wine of life, we all felt once more the immense gulf that separates Italian and English singing—a gulf of temperament and training as well as larynx. The English adore Italian opera, but there is nothing in the world which they find it harder to sing. And the audience, recognising this invariable "hundred per cent" quality in our Neapolitan visitors, responded to the big arias with roars of almost Italian applause, for which they were promptly—and quite wrongly—rebuked by *The Times;* Mozart himself, as Mr. Paul Hirsch pointed out in an admirable letter, was much disappointed if his arias went unapplauded. All the same, it was stupid to clap at the end of the first section of "Ah fors' è lui," and quite deplorable to smother the delicate orchestral postlude which concludes the third act of *La Bohème.* But if applause is sometimes vexing, its absence can be disastrous. For some obscure reason, the Brindisi in the first act of *La Traviata* was received the other night, although decidedly well sung, in a chilling silence which was quite as uncomfortable as if a first-rate anecdote had fallen absolutely flat at a lunch party.

Of the four operas which I have so far seen, the *Traviata* was much the most enjoyable. It is an opera which depends almost entirely on its protagonist, and in Margherita Carosio the company possesses an excellent Violetta. To begin with, she is slim and pretty; and these are not negligible qualifications in a consumptive heroine who scarcely leaves the stage for a moment from one end of the opera to the other, and whose personal charms are supposed to be the *raison d'être* of the action. To these initial advantages she adds intelligence and dramatic power, admirable diction and a soprano voice of good, though not superlative, quality. Her Violetta was an entirely credible and consistent character: impulsive, generous, charming, and yet with something hectic in her gaiety which from the very first pointed towards the pathos of the last act. I have only two faults to find in it, and one of them can be cured with a little soap and water and a scrubbing brush: blood-red finger-nails are really an unthinkable anachronism in La Dame aux Camélias! My other quarrel concerns a point of vocal style: I wish Mme Carosio would trust more often to the expressive qualities of a pure undisturbed *cantilena :* she can do it so well when she likes.

But this is a general fault with our visitors, that they take too short a view of their phrases, and proceed to the climax by a series of little jerks, squeezes and pushes (and sometimes by sobs and gasps) instead of by that long and noble *legato* which was once the glory of the Italian stage. Round, pure, sweet tone, accurate pitch and an even scale—these are the foundations of good singing; and it is desirable to remind ourselves of this from time to time, even though such luxuries are scarcely obtainable to-day. In point of fact many so-called "star casts" in pre-war seasons used to offend against these canons quite as badly as the San Carlo people; but among the latter—and especially among the men—there is enough youthful talent to encourage the hope that one or two of them may some day turn into the real thing.

Apart from Mme Carosio, the *prime donne* are an uninteresting lot. Lina Aimaro, the Gilda, coolly transposed "Caro Nome" down a semitone, not because she was unable to manage it as written, but simply and solely in order to finish it on a loud high E flat in place of Verdi's delicious and carefully calculated effect of the voice dying away in a prolonged shake on the last repetition of the words "Gualtier Maldè"—an effect which used to be so ravishingly realised by Melba. Onelia Fineschi is a routine Mimi of the second rank, and Iolanda Magnoni a Tosca whose vocal equipment consists of an effective B flat and C above the stave and the usual hopeless muddle everywhere else: her "Vissi d'arte" was one of the untidiest I have ever heard. Since Benvenuto Franci, a baritone famous in his day, has taken to bawling and guzzling his way through the role of Scarpia without the smallest attempt at finesse, it may be imagined that this was a rather unfortunate performance of *La Tosca.* It was, however, saved from nullity by Mario del Monaco, a young tenor who is probably the most handsome and romantic Cavaradossi ever seen at Covent Garden. I fear that Hollywood will snap him up, and this will be a pity, because he has a good deal of voice, still a little on the raw side, but powerful, ringing and heroic. He is one of a trio of young tenors (I believe they are all in their twenties) who may be compared with the "baby ballerinas)" Baronova, Toumanova and Riabouchinska, of the early De Basil period. The other two are Mario Binci, a pleasant Rodolfo, and Luigi Infantino, the most vocally gifted of the three, whose Duke in *Rigoletto,* though rhythmically a trifle stolid, was certainly a sensational affair. A fourth promising young singer is the baritone Paolo Silveri, whose forthright Marcello was one of the best features of a thoroughly enjoyable *Bohème.*

Beside the sparkling Violetta, the two Germonts in *Traviata* made a somewhat wooden impression. As Alfredo, Signor Gallo sang well enough; but someone must induce him to surrender that absurd little riding crop to which he clung like a mascot all the way through "De' miei bollenti spiriti" and which, together with his brown velveteen suit, gave him the incongruous appearance of a horsey Bunthorne. Germont *père,* in the person of Signor Tagliabue, wore a frock coat surmounted by a sort of Eton collar fatally suggestive of a venerable Mr. Bultitude; I can't think why some baritones insist on making this character so pompous and so immensely old; if you look at a photograph of Scotti in the part, you will see, not a shabby Victorian statue come to life, but a middle-aged and highly presentable aristocrat. Signor Tagliabue, however, came into his own on the following night with a resonant, well acted and extremely effective Rigoletto. Among the smaller parts, I thought I detected more than a spark of talent in the Maddalena of Wanda Madonna.

The scenery was Covent Garden stock, still effective in the two Paris street scenes of *La Bohème,* but hardly charming or luxurious enough for the "high-life" interiors of *Rigoletto* and *Traviata.* Franco Capuana, the principal conductor, did well within the limits of presumably inadequate rehearsal time, but did not always succeed in persuading the British orchestra to play the accompaniments to the arias either softly or flexibly enough; absurdly simple on paper, the Verdian rum-tum-tum is among the most difficult things to bring off in practice, especially when a woodwind solo has to follow the voice in thirds or sixths. However, in the orchestral pit as on the stage, there was always plenty of vitality, and that, after all, is the one indispensable ingredient in Italian opera.
DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

IN THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR

BY ALEXANDER BLOK

In the cathedral choir a girl stood singing
Of all the weary on an alien shore,
Of all ships gone to sea, and of all people
Who can remember happiness no more.

Her voice went soaring in the cupola,
And, listening in the darkness, everyone
Saw how the sunlight touched her on the shoulder,
And how her white dress sang in the beam of sun.

It seemed to all that happiness was coming;
The ships had reached a haven free from harm;
And in the strange land all the tired people
Had found a life of brightness and of calm.

Sweet voice—thin beam. Only a child was crying,
High up inside the sanctuary door,
Admitted to the mystery, understanding
That nobody will come back any more.

Translated by FRANCES CORNFORD

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Scheming Lieutenant," Arts Theatre
"But for the Grace of God," St. James's Theatre

Towards the end of a long day's motoring there comes a point when small mechanical defects seem to get right of their own accord. Dashboard instruments, long dead, suddenly begin to register again; and a newer and more powerful car seems to emerge as the oil penetrates to the deepest recesses of whatever it is. For all its lightness and slightness, Sheridan's little comedy shows all the warmth and workableness of authorship at the height of its powers. *St. Patrick's Day,* or *The Scheming Lieutenant,* is written with this kind of lubricated ease which only long practice can bring. Sheridan had just given *The Rivals* its final polish. The praise of the critics gave him confidence. He was already planning *The Duenna.* One of his actors was hard up. A curtain-raiser could be thrown off as a by-product, to provide for him. Sheridan began it in the heat and finished the manuscript, unblotted and uncorrected, on the evening of the next day, with an enormous S signed exhibitionistically across the last page.

Yet the play is a small epitome of Sheridan's qualities. A crisp story is told by characters economically limited to a single trait per head. One of these, Dr. Rosy, demonstrates the authentic universality, with his moralising habit of filling whatever pause in the action there may be with reflections on the vanity of human wishes . . . for we are but shadows . . . gilded cages. There is a pinch of Sheridan's special mixture of heartlessness and humanity. The scheme is to win the girl from her anti-military parents. A soldier husband returns, says the mother, "like a Colossus, with one leg in New York and the other at the Chelsea Hospital." "Then I will be his bride," says Lauretta. "No," says Mrs. Credulous, "Give me a husband who knows where his limbs *are.*"

It is a pity that the easy assurance of this writing gets rather buried, at the Arts, in slight over-production. It is right to retain the traditional gags, but too much dumb-show business takes the mind off Sheridan, and we are stunned with a succession of neat touches. Mr. Colin Chandler, who can carve the smoothest production out of the raw wood of R.A.D.A. students, has failed on this occasion with the more seasoned professionals. Their timing is never quite in gear with the rhythm of the play. Sheridan must never be played for more laughs than are in the lines: on the contrary the least probable scenes must be acted with a certain gravity, ironical but intent.

What would Sheridan's convention of the Comedy of Manners, with its rich talk and gesture, think of the Lonsdale convention of the Comedy of Ill Manners, where nobody moves except in anger, and most of the characters give the impression, remarkable in a medium built of dialogue, that they are almost completely silent? The St. James's Theatre, with its still potent atmosphere of No Smoking, reminds us that this is really the George Alexander-Pinero convention, of restful competence. The annual play would not yet have opened, but Sir Arthur would already be thinking of packing his trunks for Monte Carlo. In Mr. Lonsdale's play, except for the slight sex scrimmage (which is brought right up to scratch) and the astonishing tough scrap for the compromising letters, everything is, of course, very much toned down. In fact, brilliant old Lonsdalers like Mr. Stoker or Mr. J. H. Roberts, or charming old mummers like Mr. A. E. Matthews, underplay so assiduously that one begins to think idly of rant in reverse, and wonders if there is such a thing as an inverted ham. Mr. Lonsdale wisely makes no attempt to explain the presence of these eminent background characters In the foreground, the acting differs. The young girl who has to confess incomplete fidelity to her affianced lover, is wedded all too faithfully to the six basic movements of strong comedy acting. But Mr. Michael Gough, as the crook brother who forces the confession, is a most original bit of fantasy. Meanwhile, Mr. Robert Douglas, the returning lover, cuts clean across both characters and across everybody else by speaking his lines as if he felt them, and thought them, and meant them, which frankly is not quite Lonsdale, though it certainly added to the many pleasures of the evening by suggesting authentic Alexander.
STEPHEN POTTER

"Gold Is Where You Find It," Unity Theatre
"The Merchant of Venice," New Yiddish Theatre

Gold is Where You Find It is Mr. Bill Rowbotham's most recent contribution to Unity Theatre's "political pantomimes," a tradition that started in 1938 with *Babes in the Wood.* It is a curious genre, part revue, part musical comedy with a strong pantomime flavour, and it suits Unity's peculiar purpose admirably.

The plot deals with a Stock Exchange gold-hunt that takes place on the site of the holiday-camp Sunnyside, a big-hearted community where the guests live in huts called "L'Amour," "Blue Lagoon" and "The Nest," and the staff wear "Kiss Me Quick" painted round their hats. As is usual in political satire (of which we see lamentably little in British theatre) the destructive elements—here kept whole-heartedly cheerful though barbed—are much happier than the occasional bursts of constructiveness. The music lacks first-rate melodies, but as a framework for patter-lyrics it is neat and energetic and occasionally witty on its own account. Though the romantic sub-plot hurts, it is mercifully reduced to the utmost minimum and the production claims some very creditable comedians to do justice to the book.

At the New Yiddish Theatre, just off the Commercial Road in Aldgate, Mr. Robert Atkins has produced a Yiddish translation (literal and therefore easy to follow with the help of an English copy) of *The Merchant of Venice,* in which the Shylock is a superbly Jewish Jew, Jessica looks at home and the rest of the cast make a fair shot at play-acting Gentiles. It is worth a visit to Adler Street to experience Jewish acting — emphatic, often remarkably audience-conscious, highly coloured, vocally energetic, hyper-articulate and in every effect larger than life-size: in fact, a style that is the very antithesis of the British school of naturalism. The three-piece orchestra, the indomitable audience and the overwhelmingly strenuous interval are an important part of the performance, and an evening in Adler Street is no time to relax.

Meier Tzelniker, who is also a grotesque comedian, plays Shylock with all the racial qualities and mannerisms purposely heightened, and the performance has excitement, passion and moments of guarded restraint that cry out for a larger stage. He gives a magnificent intensity to the scene of the baiting by Solanio and Salarino and to the following Tubal scene, but much of the courtroom scene loses effect for want of stage depth. His playing, apart from a pleasant Lorenzo and Jessica, is the evening's outstanding merit. Portia has marked Central European characteristics that become the *grande dame* of Belmont somewhat unhappily; very little can ever be done to save Bassanio from himself, and I felt that Antonio was played without understanding, to the play's great loss. The production is often heavy and lacks variety of rhythm and pace; there is some controversial scene-shuffling, and a mimed interpolation of Shylock's return to his deserted house left me feeling very uneasy. I have seen the New Yiddish players in a contemporary Jewish farce, and their broadened dramatic style appeared there as a virtue where here it is a little inclined to exhaust both spectator (especially the unconditioned) and play. But Shylock and the circumstances, which are interesting in themselves, repay a visit; at least there can be no half-hearted reaction.

SIRIOL HUGH JONES

RADIO NOTES

I HAVE been reading a B.B.C. pamphlet by that acute critic Philip Hope-Wallace on the second series, now beginning, of World Theatre plays. Without minimizing the limitations of "blind drama," he puts it, as an artistic and emotional entertainment, rather higher than I do; but he is, of course, right in saying that it is quite unfair to compare listening to a radio play with seeing that play on the stage, and that its proper comparison is with hearing it read aloud, than which mild entertainment it is as much better as professional actors' voices can make it. I bore this in mind when listening to *The School for Scandal*. A capable performance; but how naiveté and clumsiness are emphasised when only heard! Particularly the outmoded convention of soliloquized asides. These look absurd to-day even on the stage; but at least there the dramatic devices of past centuries are carried off by the costume suitable to them; not seeing this, the play comes to us partly modernised, and dead conventions obtrude and jar. Besides this, the characters when not amplified and materialized by physical appearance take on a cruder, thinner simplicity, tending more towards types. One has to adapt oneself, and meet these disembodied voices with patient imagination.

Patience in listening can, however, be overcome. It will do nothing to blast the atmosphere of cosy silliness which infests so many programmes, mainly, but by no means always, Light. Housewives complain that their "choices" are introduced of a morning with facetious nonsense-talk, Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony with chatter about bacon; these busy and responsible adults, who have many of them asked for good music, have it dished out to them with the homely jests to a curate at a Mothers' Parish Party. And as to our organists, swingers, crooners, melody-makers, and the like, with their "little numbers," "hit tunes," "this is so-and-so wishing you lots of luck and saying till then," announcers announcing programmes with yells suggestive of a cup-tie final, and the rest of the unseemly verbiage with which third-rate entertainment is served, as with some nauseous and pervading sauce, how long must it be endured? The answer given to objectors is that people who dislike this kind of thing need not listen, and that those who like it must have it. Is it an answer really adequate to the confused, half-conscious needs of a semi-educated people groping their way towards culture? With the starting of the Third Programme, there will tend to be an even wider cleavage between the different "spheres of influence."

The old familiars are returning from the holidays—Itma, Nurse Dugdale, the Brains Trust. This last is, it seems, to be more of a "closed shop" than before, which is a pity. However good the speakers, they become over familiar, and it is dull not to break new ground. Many of the best talkers have never been tried, and fresh blood is good for health and circulation. No one should be heard, I think, more than once a month; they would be all the fresher for it. One can think straight off of a score of people who would probably be admirable in this kind of snap discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, September 22nd.* Concert (3 p.m.); The Passing of Crab Village (10 p.m.).

Monday. Concert (7 p.m.).

Tuesday. Great Occasions in Parliament (L.P. 10 a.m.); For Export Only (L.P. 3 p.m.); Record Review (L.P. 6 p.m.).

Wednesday. La Bohème (7 p.m.).

Thursday. Thursday Concert (7.30 p.m.); "Sparks" (9.30 p.m.).

Friday. Book Talk (6.45 p.m.); Henry Reed, "Gerontion" (11.30 p.m.).

Saturday. Twentieth-Century Wind Music (11.3 p.m.).

J. V. STE-MAXIME

THE MOVIES

"Theirs is the Glory," at the Gaumont
"The Bridge," C.O.I.
"Night and Day," at the Warner

Most of the Arnhem film is a brilliant reconstruction, shot there last year by using the remnants of the airborne army to re-enact the scenes they witnessed themselves. Yet few films have caught so well the atmosphere of battle or the mood and courage of ordinary men as this story of the few thousands who dropped out of the sky on that September morning. Unlike its official predecessors, which had to pack a campaign into an hour, this film deals only with the events of nine days in and around Arnhem. It deliberately tries to see the operation through the eyes of the men, surrounded by a superior enemy force, pounded by merciless fire in an ever-shrinking perimeter, out of contact with the Second Army driving up the Nijmegen corridor and often without any clear idea of how things were going in the next street. It is held together only by a thread of narrative; yet it captures the confusion of bitter street fighting so vividly that continuity is never lost. As the situation grows more desperate, as terrible casualties eat into the strength of the force, the film brings out in moving splendour the true stature of the exhausted men, the bank clerks, ploughmen and workers who, without armour or artillery, held out until a handful were ferried away in the night. It is difficult to select the outstanding moments in a film of such quality. I should pick the shots of the men's faces when they see transport planes fly through thick flak to drop much-needed supplies—which fall straight into German hands: the moments at the edge of the river when boats from the Second Army cross to rescue the survivors: the scenes in the fox-holes at night under intensive mortar fire; and the half-dozen sequences showing groups of men, cut off without food, water or ammunition, holding on, even going out one at a time to take on a Nazi tank. This is not one of the ordinary run of films; it is too tense, too evocative of deep emotion. Those who made it have done justice to the men whose heroism they have recorded.

The Bridge, in its way, is also a tribute, this time to Yugoslavia. Photographed last year in and around Rogatica, it is an excellent study of a town ruined in successive battles, whose people, ragged and only just above the level of starvation, are co-operating to get life running on normal lines again. To ensure their winter food supply, the railway between Belgrade and Sarajevo must be rebuilt and a new bridge thrown across the Drina. Jack Chambers and the Data Film Unit have made a fine job of this picture, which has a commentary and sound-track of a standard as high as the photography. It is a pity that the Central Office of Information has not as yet secured it for public exhibition.

As the posters tell you, *Night and Day* is a screen biography of Cole Porter. Surprisingly enough, it also throws in Monty Woolley's career as make-weight. If you enjoy elaborate dance numbers in colour and you like Cole Porter's tunes, you can bear this film for two hours. But it really tells you very little about Mr. Porter except that he looks like Cary Grant.

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JONATHAN CAPE

Correspondence

SQUATTERS

SIR,—I should like to criticise two points made by your anonymous correspondent last week in his article "The Squatters Move In."

(1) "To tolerate the squatters would be to accept the principle that empty flats will in future be allocated by direct action."

As the Squatters and the Communist Party have tirelessly pointed out, their intention is simply to present the Government with the demand of the common people of London and England that all empty accommodation should immediately be requisitioned by local authorities or, should they be unwilling, by the Government itself, and devoted to the relief of the worst cases of homelessness. It is a demand that the housing emergency should be dealt with in the same spirit as were war emergencies, and that private property rights should be subordinated to the alleviation of human misery. Once the Government takes such action, and few would argue that it should not, the danger of "direct action" will be gone, and the empty houses, too.

(2) "Kensington is determined to maintain its position and can, not unreasonably, argue that the middle classes also have their housing problem."

With taxation at its present level, few middle-class families can afford to pay ten guineas per week for a small flat, let alone the £960 per year demanded for some of the flats now occupied by squatters. Such rents, and the £10,000, or so, asked for the empty houses of Hampstead, are within the means only of the very rich—or the new rich, the Black Marketeer.

29 Park Mansions,
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J. DOWNIE

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

SIR,—You imply that the Labour Government is disappointing the country and is losing support at some speed in consequence. What evidence is there of this? Can it not be equally contended that the "honeymoon" period has been protracted longer than one might have expected in view of the extremely difficult problems with which the Government is faced?

You go on to say that the threatened capitalist interests are strenuously defending the old order which is still, under the Labour Government, the established system. Were you expecting the order to change overnight, or even to be abolished by the end of the Labour Government's period of office? Surely this could not be the case unless one is assuming a departure from British political practice and its substitute by a revolution based on dictatorial powers. Apparently this reaction by capitalist interests was immediately evident within a matter of weeks after the Labour victory because of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy. Is it contended that this is the case? The Labour foreign policy may be right and wrong, but surely it is a foreign policy which the Labour Government intended to carry out and not one which was forced upon them overnight after their assumption of power.

You then go on to point out the change of policy on the nationalisation of the steel industry as evidence of a similar factor on the domestic front. This development must be deplored because it is a political defeat for the Government. Is it not a case, however, of an attempt to pursue a policy which is not supported by the Trade Unions concerned? The Miners' Union was quite definite in its desire for the nationalisation of the mines, but was the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation of the same mind with regard to the nationalisation of steel? It can be contended that the Government's policy was mistaken in that it tried to do something which naturally does not have the support of the employers but which is also not supported, at the present moment, by the men's organisation.

You complete your remarks by the observation that Socialism means a Socialist administration. Few would disagree with you, but is such an administration expected to result immediately? During the war vast schemes have caused an unprecedented growth in the size of all the organisations concerned. This has brought with it the attendant problems which arise from an inability to cope with the situation on technical grounds.

In consequence, one has the maddening experience of Departments, especially Service Departments, holding on to requisitioned properties because of their inability to see their future requirements. This is not a defence of the Departments concerned and the only way of effecting any change is by a spontaneous movement on the part of the people such as we have seen in the squatting movement. This movement will do a great deal of good and also a great deal of harm. It will provide Ministers, Members of Parliament, members of local authorities and many others with that needed push which will jerk the Departments concerned into an activity which was not previously possible. It will also mean a breaking of the queue for houseroom which will lead to a certain measure of injustice and it may seriously delay many needed social advantages in education and the like where buildings will be taken over for accommodation when they are needed for training centres, and other purposes.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the Government does not possess powers which it would have in Russia, where, according to many accounts, one resuscitates a city like Stalingrad by first rebuilding the factories, then the schools and other public buildings leaving the housing of the people as almost the last priority. Every now and then a certain measure of popular discontent will not only warn the Government of a need to attend to certain problems but will also give it that power which will enable it to solve them. If the popular revolts are unduly frequent it will mean that the Government is failing to live up to its job, but many would contend that there is no evidence yet that this is the case. Labour, after all, is founded upon the belief that the existing society produced social injustice seen in a large body of people who were badly paid, fed, housed, clothed and educated. The very truth of Labour's contention in this matter will be shown by these difficulties in taking office. The Labour Government has got to produce something more difficult to produce than any capitalist administration and it is bound to record some failures as it goes along, but there is no evidence yet that it will fail to respond to the major portions of this task. M. L.

REORIENTATIONS

SIR,—The two important articles on foreign affairs which your recent issues have contained are a timely expression of the alarm which an increasing number of Government supporters feel in regard to British policy. As you rightly point out, we are much in the same position to America as was France to Britain after Locarno, only that our position is weaker. But though agreeing with your general analysis, I am sceptical of the conclusion that "we must associate with ourselves other Powers which seek, like us, in their own interests to avoid taking sides in the Russian-American struggle for power." I should have thought it unlikely that in the present state of world affairs it would be possible to constitute a neutral Bloc which could stand aloof from the two major groups. International relationships are too closely knit to make isolationism, even the isolationism of a Bloc, feasible.

So what? I become convinced that the commercial imperialism of U.S.A. is a factor making more directly for war than the expansion of Soviet influence which it provokes. If so, the reorientation required in the interests of peace is not only a policy freeing Britain from dependence on America, but one which would bring her into closer contact with Russia. That belief in turn is based on the conviction that, once it was clear to Moscow that we were no longer automatically supporting the American lead, we should

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discover that Soviet aims were radically compatible with British interests. We should probably swing the greater part of Europe into line with us and so call a check to the more aggressive of American commercial schemes. To advocate this is not to imply "appeasement" of Stalin or any complete rupture of Anglo-American relationships. Indeed, the delicacy of such a diplomacy would be to preserve friendly relations and yet to assert a greater independence.

I hasten to add that I see little hope of the Government pursuing this course, since it would involve a much more revolutionary Socialist policy at home as well as abroad. Our reliance on the loan is the fruit of gradualism. Only if we dare to form economic ties with Russia, with all the political implications entailed, can we free ourselves from America's pocket. And, until we so dare, we shall be dragged nearer to the brink of a conflict in which we shall find ourselves on the wrong side.

KENNETH INGRAM

LABOUR AND FRENCH SOCIALISM

SIR,—Before the results of the French Socialist Party Conference are forgotten, something more might be said of them from the angle of British Labour and our own responsibility for Social-Democracy in Europe. Mr. Zilliacus, in your issue of September 7th, is unfortunately near the truth when he writes of the Conference "rebels" being "uncomfortably aware of their own lack of feasible alternative policy." I should only doubt whether they have yet reached such a conscious awareness of their predicament. The French Socialist Party is going through a phase which reminds one uncomfortably of the history of the I.L.P. after it left the Labour Party, and was determined both to sever itself from the reformism of the Right and, at the same time, to maintain a Left position independent of the Communist Party. In the event, its policy came to be determined, not by the objective needs of the situation, but by its own determination to maintain an independent position at all costs. Like the I.L.P. in different circumstances, the French Socialist Party finds itself in a position in which its policy is being determined far too much by reaction to its immediately uncomfortable position as the middle part of the "sandwich," than by considerations of the long term role of Social-Democracy in Europe. And it is doubtful whether, in present circumstances, the French Party can "get outside itself" sufficiently to develop the strategy which is necessary to make of Social-Democracy a positive force in France, and so in Europe. My own conviction, at the conclusion of the Conference, was that both the old and new leadership is too subjectively involved in immediate tactical problems to be able to give the lead that is required, and that this lead can only be given internationally by a Social-Democratic party which can bring to the problem an objectivity and long-term view founded on its own assured position. And that means the British Labour Party.

Unfortunately the Labour Party was not even officially represented at the French Party Conference by a member of the Executive, and it has followed this by an account of the Conference (in *Labour Press Service* over the signature of Mr. William Pickles) which, where it is accurate, is likely to add little to the understanding, by members of the British Labour Party, of the position and prospects of their comrades in the French Party. (André Philip, for example, was *not* "leader of the defeated section," but himself a critic, though less severe, of past policy.)

What is disturbing, in all this, is that the only Social-Democratic party capable of giving a lead and of having something more than an "attitude" about Social-Democracy, is apparently hardly interested in the fate of its sister Parties now fighting for their existence in Europe. Is it not time that the British Labour Party took the lead in calling together the forces of Social-Democracy in Europe and in contributing itself to the working out of a common strategy for Socialism and for democracy?

5, Northall Road,
Barnehurst, Kent.

ARTHUR SUDBERY

RACE AGAINST TIME?

SIR,—As one who, since being demobilised some ten months ago, has continually endeavoured in argument and discussion to justify our attitude internationally—certainly at times a little hard to understand—I have, during the past few days, been confronted with two statements attributed to responsible persons, which I am going to find very difficult to explain.

The statements I have in mind are:—

(First) by Marshal of the Air Force, Lord Tedder, who, when referring to the paucity of recruits for the R.A.F., is reported to have said that it was "a *race against time*."

(Secondly)—and I quote from the *News Chronicle* of September 12th—Field-Marshal Montgomery in the U.S.A. commenting on Army Training methods, stated "the British *cannot afford to waste time*," and that was why he was studying the quickest and best way of training officers.

I, and I am sure many others, would like to know what is at the back of the minds of our Chiefs of Staffs. What is the event anticipated that makes "time" such a vital factor?

J. A. RONCORONI (Ex. Maj. R.A.)

SOVIET CULTURE

SIR,—In your London Diary of Sept. 7, Critic discusses the "new turn in the cultural screw" in the Soviet Union. I am tempted to add a corrective since some of his statements appear inadequate and others erroneous.

Is the overhaul of Party and State machinery, and the return of troops from abroad, a large enough peg on which to hang the new ideological drive? Surely its pivot as well as that of the revived militancy is the fact that a series of new Five Years Plans have been started with the avowed object of "catching up and surpassing the most highly developed European countries" and of attaining Communism in a measurable time. Only this positive programme can explain this ideological revival which has been prepared since 1944. The reasons given by Critic are merely incidental to the whole. We should be grievously wrong if we under-estimated the importance of this positive programme which is fraught with even more world significance than the plans of the 1928–41 period.

Similarly, is Critic correct in saying that "Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* was attacked for presenting the tyrant in too favourable a light?" First, to avoid confusion, only the second part of the film has been criticised and denied release. Secondly, the attack in general is not against historical films as such but against "cold and impartial 'historicism' in films which show neither people, historical personalities nor real historical truth." Thirdly, the second part of *Ivan* is damned because it is alleged to fall into this category of "historicism." Far from attacking Eisenstein for "presenting the tyrant in too favourable a light," the criticism is that "This film contains no picture of Russia or Moscow in that period; it is full of court intrigues. Contrary to historical truth, Ivan is shown *not* as a *progressive statesman*, but as a maniac, raving in the company of gangsters chosen by himself." Thus the film has been judged "unhistorical" because it has departed from the conception of Ivan as the "founder of the Russian State." In this second part, Eisenstein appears to have slipped into the "psychological error" of the romantic historians who depicted Ivan as a "crazy tyrant" rather than a constructive statesman.

While historical subjects are now in no sense banned if they are not vitiated by "historicism" or lack of ideological perspective, it is true that authors, playwrights, film producers and theatre managers are directed to pay increasing attention to contemporary and topical themes reflecting the constructive reality of to-day. In other words, they are expected to play their part in "raising the ideological awareness of the masses" (as well as their own), who are now to be

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prepared and educated for Communism and morally mobilised for the execution of the new Plan. In this context Zoshchenko has sinned grievously by remaining a-political, personal and creatively unaware of the "great goal" towards which all energies must be concentrated.

43 Vicarage Court,
London, W.8.
George Reavey

THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE FUTURE

Sir,—There is now a widespread acceptance of the view that a number of new Universities are needed in Britain, and combined with that view is a growing belief that only the residential University can give that wider education which we all desire. It is clear that the present provincial Universities will, so far as the bulk of their students is concerned, continue to be non-residential, since they draw the bulk of their students from the town in which they are situated, or from its immediate neighbourhood. Certain of the smaller University Colleges do have a fair proportion of residential students, but these make up a small proportion of the whole student body of the country.

So long as Universities are built in the larger towns, as for instance, your suggestion of a University at Stoke-on-Trent, then it seems to be certain that they will in the main be non-residential. On the other hand, Universities built now in small towns would of necessity be outside the towns and away from their main life. In the new towns which are now to be built, however, we have a unique opportunity for building a University which will be part of the town in which it is built, and which can have adequate space put at its disposal right from the start. Not only is the opportunity a unique one up to the present—it is an opportunity which is most unlikely to recur.

A strong case could be made out for the view that the construction of new Universities is the strongest argument for the construction of new towns at all. It is strange that Lord Reith's Committee dismissed it in a line and a half. **J. M. Burnett**

Imperial College of Science and Technology,
London, S.W.7.

PAPER RATIONING

Sir,—Although I consider that controls are generally to the public benefit, the virtual banning of new publications under Paper Order No. 70 seems to me a serious gag on freedom of expression, without contributing in any way to the general good.

The position at present is that I can have a ton of letter-headings printed, but risk a heavy fine or imprisonment if I cause even a hundredweight of it to be used in publishing a new political or literary weekly. Under the above order, paper for new magazines, etc., is limited to 56 lbs. weekly, which, of course, makes it quite impossible to run even the smallest paper that will pay its way. The proportion of advertising material permitted also places any new paper at a crippling disadvantage to existing journals.

You are doubtless aware of the favoured position in which existing publications find themselves, although I am sure, if space permits, you will be good enough to publish this letter. I think you will agree with me that there does exist at present a serious gag on the freedom of the press in this respect.

It is ironical that a Socialist Government should ban any little new weekly paper, while football-pool promoters are using what must be many tons each week—enough to float dozens of small journals!

It isn't as though all kinds of new undertakings were prohibited. Most retail trades know no such prohibition. Nor is any saving in paper effected. I know many printers who have the paper, or could obtain it through proper channels if required; they are simply forbidden to use it for periodical printing, while freely permitted to use it for what I consider are much less worthwhile purposes.

My concrete suggestions are: (*a*) that new papers should be allowed the same proportion of advertising matter as similar types of existing publications, and (*b*) that printers should be permitted to use such paper as they are able properly to obtain for printing periodicals, at their discretion.

46 Hamilton Road,
Wimbledon, S.W.19.
A. H. Hughes

OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

Sir,—With reference to Mr. H. V. Hancock's letter in your last issue, it is apparently now permissible to correspond with Japanese nationals.

An agency message (which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been published in any London newspaper) last week said that with effect from September 10th postcards (but not letters) and food parcels may be sent to Japan. No details were given as to the form of address required, but I imagine that correspondence to a Japanese address, c/o A.P.O. 500, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Cal., U.S.A., should arrive in from two to three weeks. A.P.O. 500 is the U.S. Army Post Office in Tokyo, and when I left Japan in July last, mail from the United States was coming through very quickly.

I ought perhaps to warn prospective correspondents that owing to the widespread destruction in all the major Japanese cities (with the exception of Kyoto), it would be better not to write to a private address if an alternative one to a bank or other kind of organisation is available.

London, W.8. **John Morris**

FILMS AND THE CHILD MIND

Sir,—I do not wish to enter the controversy as to the extent to which juvenile delinquency is caused by the cinema, but should like to record the observations I have made as a member of the teaching profession on the effect of the film on the child mind.

About a year ago I left a school where visits to a cinema were, in term time at least, forbidden, and took up a post at a school, where no such prohibition existed. Both were private schools and catered for a similar class of the population. The difference in the width of general interests displayed by the pupils was no less than astounding. It appears that frequent cinema attendance almost completely saps great sections of the child's spontaneous originality. Here is a typical comment of one of the regular cinema goers, a very intelligent boy of 11: "I don't like staying up late. There's nothing to stay up for, if nothing good's on on the wireless." I can generally pick out the most regular cinema "fan," apart from his usually unnaturally white face, by his lack of ability to occupy himself in the playground, by his lack of reading—excepting "comics" and there only the the picture strips—and, of course, by his conversation with others, which centres almost entirely on the latest wireless plays, and the films he has seen or proposes to see. The prevention of the growth of the reading habit is easily one of the most disastrous results of continued attendance at the pictures by young children, where they can pick up a story with so much less trouble than by ploughing through a book. It is a problem that deserves more attention than it has so far received.

Schoolmaster

Sir,—Mr. A. G. Rose has sidetracked the issue. It would also seem that he has misunderstood Professor Burt, for the latter writes in his book *The Subnormal Mind*, p. 171, an analysis of the impact of the cinema on the mind of the adolescent which coincides with that advanced in your original article. It does not, as Mr. Rose suggests, contradict it. The concluding sentence of one paragraph reads: "Almost inevitably, the child acquires precocious familiarity with sexual affairs, and becomes acquainted with distorted if not degraded standards of morality and conduct." **J. P. Mayer**

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ROUTLEDGE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE rivalry between Thackeray and Dickens has persisted since their deaths. In the generation born during the last quarter of the nineteenth century I have noticed usually an admiration for Thackeray and a regretful, almost physical, repugnance for Dickens. In the succeeding generation these preferences are reversed. And even those of us who find Thackeray more congenial must, I am afraid, admit that his genius is less astonishing than Dickens's, while his faults are almost equally vexatious. Neither man was conscientious as an artist. (It is doubtful, indeed, how far any novelist before Flaubert thought in terms of artistic conscience: Miss Austen would have rallied any such notion, though no writer more than she has acted upon it.) Dickens, one suspects, could never have made his novels other than they were, but Thackeray, less gifted, better educated, altogether more civilised, was a victim of his need for popularity and money, or at least of the low æsthetic morality then taken for granted. (The bad effects of writing for serialisation can hardly be over-estimated.) *Vanity Fair* is two-thirds a masterpiece, one-third exasperating in its silliness. You read *The Newcomes* rejoicing in the unsurpassable variety and richness of the social scene; but after the hundredth sermon against mercenary marriages are you not tempted to sneak out of the conventicle? *Pendennis* seems desultory, dawdling, interminable, unless you are specially interested either in its author or in the Victorian Age—and then it fascinates. (Saintsbury read it " scores of times ": do such Gargantuan appetites still exist?) *Henry Esmond* has a perfection evident in no other of Thackeray's novels, but you could dismiss it—I don't—as a *tour de force*. No other novelist, except Balzac, has portrayed convincingly so wide a range of individuals and worlds, yet I doubt whether Thackeray will ever again be popular. He wrote like an angel—an often careless angel. How comes it that Trollope should be outlasting a writer so conspicuously more delightful in style and more powerful in imagination? The answer presumably is that Trollope did not noticeably pad, did not often moralise, and never obtruded his personality.

Mr. Gordon N. Ray's edition of *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray** is a most important affair, but hardly one that will win new admirers for the Master. The two volumes that have now appeared contain over eight hundred letters and take us up to the end of 1851; the next two volumes will go to the end of his life; and these are to be followed by the letters in English hands that Mr. Ray is now collecting. While it is proper that every scrap of Thackeray's correspondence should be available to scholars, the general public can hardly be expected, I fear, to perk up much interest until it is offered an anthology of the most interesting letters, for Thackeray does not emerge as a Sévigné or Walpole whose smallest beer becomes champagne.

Mr. Ray must be congratulated upon the prodigious pains he has taken with his edition. His prefatory memoranda are very useful. He apologises for the unusual extent of his annotations; and indeed he does go rather far. If Thackeray says " the best and wisest man in the world prayed that he might not be led into temptation," a footnote refers the puzzled reader to Matthew VI, 13. Yet when Lord Granville scratches his nose " going through a bullfinch " no explanation is proffered. Surely most readers are more familiar with the Lord's Prayer than with the writings of " Nimrod "? The words " pavion " and " hausel " may be mere misprints—or did Mr. Ray not recognise in them the good old words " pavior " and " hansel "? It is singular to find a student of the English nineteenth century unaware of the difference between Lady Hogg and Lady Mary Hogg, between Lady de Rothschild and Lady Louisa de Rothschild. Finally, a letter from Newman is quoted ending " since 1846 or 1847, since I went to Propaganda and came back a Philippine." Mr. Ray thinks to cast light on this by adding " that is, since Newman set out to convert his Catholic opponents and returned himself converted." I fancied I was old enough never again to be surprised by ignorance, either in myself or in others. But here I confess to amazement. Dear, good, painstaking, doctorial Mr. Ray, can you really not know that crucial date in the history of the Victorian mind—" 1845: Newman becomes a Catholic "? " Propaganda " is the famous College in Rome to which Newman went to train for the priesthood before entering the Oratorian Order of St. Philip. If I point out such occasional errors, it is because the elaboration of Mr. Ray's editing excites a similar sedulity in his critics. Every student of English literature must be grateful to him, as also to Thackeray's granddaughter, Mrs. Fuller, who has placed such rich new material at his disposal. American collectors have also been most generous, with the unfortunately important exception of Dr. Rosenbach. The book is admirably produced, and the reproductions of Thackeray's drawings are a joy.

Since Thackeray forbade his executors to authorise the writing of his life, it has been assumed—such is our too usually justified cynicism—that he had something discreditable to conceal. His daughter Lady Ritchie—an exquisite writer, by the way—in her prefaces to the Biographical Edition did give a lot of information and many quotations from his letters. Now his grandchildren have wisely allowed his extant letters to be printed without, so far as I can gather, any restrictions; and in the opened cupboard there is not a trace of a skeleton. It was already known that as an undergraduate he was extravagant and lost part of his patrimony gambling; that his wife became mad after four years of marriage; or that he then enjoyed an *amitié amoureuse* with Mrs. Brookfield to which her husband eventually put a stop. Now his losses turn out to be smaller than was suspected (the greater part of his fortune was lost in an Indian bank smash); his kindness to his sick wife seems to have been exemplary, and his relations with the Brookfields irreproachable. He emerges, moreover, as a devoted son, an affectionate stepson, an adoring father; and, if he was anything but an obliging son-in-law, that Old Campaigner, the vulgar and odious Mrs. Shawe, bears all the blame.

This is not to say that he strikes one as altogether likeable. His letters, like his books, display a strain of sentimentality that grates on the modern reader. Feeling has in our time become discredited: to be " tough " is, too commonly, thought admirable. But even those of us least affected by this fashion may well wince when we read Thackeray and Dickens. The cult of feeling first set up by Sterne, Rousseau and Diderot, then enriched by the great Romantics, became in the early Victorian years complicated with a deplorably unintellectual form of Christianity. I suspected that the religious sentiments paraded by Thackeray were merely conventional: they turn out to be nothing worse than muddle-headed. A touching diary kept when he was thirty reveals the authenticity of his religion.

> Oh, Lord God—there is not one of the sorrows or disappointments of my life, that as I fancy I cannot trace to some error, crime, or weakness of my disposition. Strengthen me then with your help, to maintain my good resolutions—not to yield to lust or sloth that beset me: or at least to combat them and overcome them sometimes.

Greed is another sin with which he repeatedly reproaches himself. His mother was a devout Evangelical who seems to have instilled in him feelings of guilt that never vanished.

His extreme unhappiness at school probably served to make such feelings more intense. (What I can least forgive him is the humbug about Charterhouse with which in *The Newcomes* he belied what he had described as a " discipline of misery.") In any case he was the victim of a chronic contest between worldliness and tenderness of conscience. It may be that he was never on good terms with himself (I believe that most great novelists have been ill-integrated characters). And the collapse of his marriage made the case worse. We now learn that his wife made several attempts at suicide, on one occasion throwing herself out of a ship into the sea. She came of bad stock, and she bore three children in less than four years. Thackeray bears much responsibility for solidifying and propagating the Victorian ideal of womanhood, with its nasty emphasis on the desirability, the all too literal desirability, of innocence. He might write condescendingly to his fiancée; " I want you to be not a thoughtless and frivolous girl, but a wise and affectionate woman "; none the less he relished her childishness. "There is nothing about her but simplicity" he wrote to his mother, " I like this milk and water in women—perhaps too much, undervaluing your ladyships' heads, and caring only for the heart part of the business." Soon she had no head to undervalue, " ceased to care 2d. for anything but her dinner and her glass of porter." At twenty-nine he was condemned to perpetual celibacy. Even engaging a governess for his children now raised problems. " Unless I liked a governess, I couldn't live with her and if I did—O Fie. The flesh is very weak, Le coeur sent toujours le besoin d'aimer. What a mercy it is I've kept clear hitherto."

There may well have been casual encounters, and one or two phrases make one curious to read the appendix we are promised upon his medical history. But the point is that he was essentially domestic. For some six years the romantic attachment to Mrs. Brookfield offered him a spectral substitute for what he needed, but in 1851 she was insulted by her husband in Thackeray's presence, and he was left solitary. It was then that he wrote to his mother:

> Very likely it is *a* woman I want more than any particular one: and some day may be investing a trull in the street with that precious jewel my heart—It is written that a man should have a mate above all things. The want of this natural outlet plays the deuce with me. Why can't I fancy some honest woman to be the titular Mrs. Tomkins. . . . What can anybody do for me? Nobody can do nothing: for say I got my desire, I should despise a woman; and the very day of the sacrifice would be the end of the attachment.

Fortunately for himself, and for George Eliot, G. H. Lewes in similar circumstances did not despise her after the " sacrifice." Poor Thackeray, was it to his social position, to his mother and children, to his vague religion or chiefly to mere inhibitions that he sacrificed his private life?

This deprivation must be supposed to have increased his sentimentality, his cynicism and his moodiness. He might be described, I fancy, as a natural introvert leading an extraverted life, and such men are always apt to distress their friends with seemingly unprovoked outbursts of ill-temper. Thackeray had more than his fair share of quarrels. When *Vanity Fair* was appearing serially, he wrote:

> Jerrold hates me, Ainsworth hates me, Dickens mistrusts me, Forster says I am false as hell, and Bulwer curses me—he is the only one who has any reason—yes, the others have a good one, too, as times go. I was the most popular man in the craft until within abt. 12 months—and behold I've begun to succeed. It makes me very sad at heart though, this envy and meanness—in the great sages and teachers of the world. Am I envious and mean too. I wonder? These fellows think so I know. Amen. God knows only. I scarcely understand any motive for any action of my own or anybody else's—

Vanity and envy are vocational diseases of writers against which most of them need to be on their guard, or they will make exhibitions of themselves with reckless chatter about injustices, persecutions, and cliques. Even before his success Thackeray gave himself airs—" Pendennis," he confessed, " is very like me." Here is a sentence from a letter to Mrs. Brookfield:

> I met on the pier as I was running for the dear life, the great Dickens with his wife his children his Miss Hogarth all looking admirably coarse, vulgar, and happy. . . .

---

* In four volumes. *Oxford University Press*. £6 6s. (Only two so far published.)

A quarrel with Forster is explained thus:

> He is angry with me for succeeding; it personally chafes him: he's hurt at my getting on in society and knowing fine people; (poor old boy, I saw *his* one card to a great house stuck in his chimney glass). . . .

Thackeray felt that he was socially a cut above most of his fellow-writers; and he sometimes failed to conceal from them this feeling, partly, I think, because his own standing was not all that he could wish. His family had been long established in the highest region of the professional class, but through a loss of fortune they now moved among persons less well-bred than themselves. Thackeray was preoccupied with snobbery because he saw so much of it at close quarters. "Tell Mary," he wrote to his mother (his cousin Mary was the Laura of *Pendennis* who had degenerated into a mixture of Blanche Amory and Becky Sharp), "Tell Mary that I may be seen riding any day with 3 Lords: it will please that candid and unenvious spirit. Heigh ho. God help us and pardon us jealousy and meanness pride and low ambition." When Thackeray's success as a writer and charm as a man made him a lion in demand among fine people like the Ashburtons, the Castlereaghs and the Stanleys of Alderley, he knew how much satisfaction this would give his mother, now leading a shabby-genteel life in Paris, though in her youth she had seemed destined to live in good society. The cheerful candour with which he describes his advancement is likely to shock any modern reader who does not know intimately his Nineteenth Century. For we have become as prudish about class as the Victorians were about sex. They knew perfectly well the power of the erotic instinct—at any rate in men. In a hitherto unpublished passage given by Mr. Ray, Thackeray writes: "They talk about English morality. Psha! there is no vice in the world more open, coarse, brutal and infamous than that of the English young gentleman." Indeed, the streets between the Strand and the Haymarket were rank with prostitutes, many of them children of fourteen or less. But the Victorian men did not wish their women to know about this; and their women agreed with them; so that the writers were forbidden those subjects which have elsewhere inspired most of the greatest novels from *Moll Flanders* and *Manon Lescaut* to *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*. (Thackeray complained about this, and none the less got into hot water, most unfairly, for *Pendennis*.) In just the same way we to-day know that class differences exist, but we prefer to turn upon them a Nelson eye. This modern form of prudery may be excusable, but it must not be allowed to falsify our historic sense. If we condemn Thackeray for snobbery, we are just as unreasonable as he was when he condemned Congreve and Sterne for indecency.

The two volumes under review contain a mass of detail that deserves fuller consideration. Thus we learn that Thackeray's father had a daughter by an Indian woman, whose child "quite black" visited the novelist in London. Then there is a curious story, unknown to me, and given on Rogers's authority, of Charles James Fox having a deaf and dumb natural child, whom he took Talleyrand, of all people, to visit. A letter, hitherto unpublished, from Thackeray to Lady Blessington after the sale of Gore House is a model of good feeling and good writing. But already I have overrun my space, with the excuse that these letters are a contribution such as we have not had for years to the history of Victorian literature. One last quotation:

> I think it is impossible for literary men to write natural letters any more: I was just going to say something, but thinks I in future ages when this letter comes to be seen, they will say he was in embarrassed circumstances—he was reckless and laughed at his prodigality, he was, etc.

Thackeray maligns himself. His letters always are deliciously natural, though he took no trouble to make them seem so. He must have been born with a silver pen in his fingers.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

PRISONER IN THE EAST

Railroad of Death. By JOHN COAST. *The Commodore Press. 12s. 6d.*

This is not a horror story, in spite of its title. Considering the wealth of material it is put together less effectively than it might be: but this is outweighed by its interest as a pretty straight objective account of one of the queerest episodes of the war—the experience of the British prisoners who were captured by the Japanese in Singapore and sent up to Siam to build a railway. Of course, everyone who has been in a show like this imagines that his group alone saw the thing as it really was. The senior officer, who had the maddening duty of making most of the official contacts with the Japanese, sees himself as the only man who can know the real difficulties of the position, and the other ranks, with their embarrassing humanity, as a tiresomely complicating factor. The private soldier, who went hungrier and was worked harder, makes hunger and work his only standard of reality, and probably regards the colonels, by and large, as overfed deadheads. The junior officer, ground between the upper and the nether millstone, thinks that he can see both sides: and probably was, in fact, in a position to see as much of the picture as anyone. John Coast was a junior officer, and writes strictly from his own point of view. His standpoint, that of the slightly bolshie subaltern, is not uncommon; nor is his expression particularly distinguished; but how admirably he succeeds in re-creating the familiar stink! The sense of being cut off from all the forces of reason, of being in the power of people whose actions make no sort of sense; the passionate desire to creep into a cushy spot, and the equally passionate necessity for showing that you had been in the tough ones; the continual greed for food; the hope of getting just sick enough to get off work; all the corruptions of impotence, as real as the corruptions of power—a corruption which only the medical officers escaped, for they alone had the capacity to do anything. And he puts all the filth, the squalor, the disease in its proper place, not as something extraordinary, but as an accepted part of the environment, like smoke in London, or wasps in August.

The difficulty in telling this kind of story is to settle on the point of view; whether to tell it as it seemed then, or as it seems afterwards, set back and contrasted with the normal decencies. At the time only a conscious effort of the imagination could recall the feeling of ordinary life: and it was an effort that few people were disposed to make. *Nessun maggior dolore.* After it is all over, only by a conscious effort can one re-create the atmosphere of a jungle camp; it is extraordinarily hard to remember what it felt like to be hungry when you have just had a reasonably decent meal. Mr. Coast has wisely chosen to write of things as they seemed then, and his memory is clear, detailed and undistorted. He avoids the unnaturally bated breath of the professional atrocity-monger, and the equally unnatural toughness of the then-he-hit-me-again school. The horrors are there; but they seem normal, as horrors do at the time: and the pleasures are real and quite simply enjoyable. Human beings have the advantage over the brute creation that they change their scale of values very quickly: it is quite easy to get into the state of mind in which a guard who kicks you only when he has rubber boots on really seems a particularly humane and forbearing sort of fellow. The return to a big base camp after a spell of work in the jungle represents for a time peace, security, comparative plenty: some leisure and intelligent company for those who care for it. There are patches in this story when the writer was probably as happy as he has ever been since. Those of his companions who found nothing to enjoy in the whole experience are probably all dead.

Mr. Coast gives few of his reflections: but the flat record of what happened suggests a number of reflections to the reader. One is that a large part of the population of Europe has lived a life like this for the last few years. The English prisoners in the East seem to have preserved their sanity to a surprisingly high degree. There are probably several reasons for this. There is not much of the barbed-wire neurosis because there was not much barbed wire. The continual movement, the shifting from one camp to another, even the daily trek out to work and back saved them from the conventional melancholia of the average prisoner. But probably the most potent factor was that they were never really without hope. They never really expected it to end otherwise than it did. But what of those (one can hardly say it too often) to whom the end of the war brought no relief, only defeat or conditions worse than that of the war itself? The people in this book thought rarely about normal life: but normality was always then as a remote background and as a distant hope for the future. The slow degeneration of the concentration-camp mentality is sufficiently suggested here. But here freedom came just in time, for those who were still alive to see it. What hope of sanity or eventual social usefulness is there for people who have forgotten what freedom is like, and have no foreseeable future? How long can men tolerate the intolerable without damaging something in their humanity beyond repair?

The other moral of the book is found in the relation between the Englishman and the various Eastern people—the Thais, the Chinese and the Javanese Eurasians. Many Englishmen have been fascinated by the East: but the great majority of them have seen it from the comfortably secure standpoint of a cantonment, a British colony or an international settlement. John Coast only saw it for a few weeks as a soldier in a disastrous campaign, and then as a prisoner. But he felt more sense of friendship with Orientals than many an English colonial in the course of a long career. Many of the prisoners in Siam were Dutchmen taken in Java: many of the Dutchmen were Eurasians, and many of these more Javanese than Dutch. The Indonesian interlude in which Mr. Coast describes these people and their problems is one of the most interesting chapters of the book. Much of what is said there applies to other mixed races in the east, a minority to whom all colonial powers, English as well as Dutch, owe more than justice, and to whom they have commonly given less. The Englishman in the East has usually represented, on the good side, order: on the bad, unloved authority and economic power. Here the Englishman is nobody, living like everybody else; living, for once, as far as his material surroundings are concerned, as many of the people of the far east live all their lives. The sympathy that sprang up in these conditions between Orientals and even a few Englishmen suggest that after all there is another possible relation between east and west than the Kipling one. Mr. Coast's book reminds us that English and Orientals were for a time allies in war. The habit might even continue in peace, if our latter-day Bourbons would let it.

GRAHAM HOUGH

A FRENCH COMPOSER

Gabriel Fauré. By NORMAN SUCKLING. *Master Musicians Series. Dent. 7s. 6d.*

The latest addition to the Master Musicians series will disappoint those who hoped for a judicious appraisal of Fauré's position in the history of music. Mr. Suckling has, it is true, a good deal to say about 19th century music in general; but his advocacy is so amateurishly emphatic, and characterised by attacks on other composers so naïvely sweeping, that even those who are predisposed in Fauré's favour are likely to be antagonised from the outset. According to Mr. Suckling the Germans—especially middle period Beethoven—are the villains to whose undeserved ascendancy is to be attributed the neglect of the French virtues in music; and the Italians are, apparently, not much better. Here is an example of Mr. Suckling's critical method:

> Scarcely had German-Italian collaboration produced its fine flower in the "Viennese Classics" than it fell apart, leaving each nationality free to indulge its own vice, so that Italian music tended to become mere noise and sensationalism while the Germans inclined towards mere sloppiness and *Schwärmerei*. Of romantic opera as produced under these two auspices it is difficult to determine which is the more repulsive. The one was characterised by Browning in his evocation of Verdi, "at his worst opera's end," apprehensive of the painful reaction his crudities must have aroused in one who remembered better things . . . while the other, though it may show a slightly better sense of the symphonic responsibilities of its medium, is no richer in musical invention and is still less worthy (even at its best in such a work as Weber's *Freischütz*) to be entertainment for adult intelligences.

And a few pages later we learn that Beethoven's "heavy-handed unsubtlety (as in the Seventh Symphony, or the choral finale of the Ninth) is all too worthy of the vulgarian expansiveness which it so frequently illustrated."

These and similar allegations, in which the book abounds, are surely quite unworthy of a professional writer on music; and (to use one of Mr. Suckling's own favourite adverbs) it is "rather" surprising that so discerning a musician as Mr. Eric Blom should allow crudities, such as would hardly pass in a school magazine, to appear in a series edited by him. That Fauré was a composer of exquisite genius who has hitherto received far too little attention, both from the public and from musicologists, is a truth that needs judicious establishment, as well as elaboration; but it cannot be maintained by the simple method of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

In the detailed discussion of Fauré's music, Mr. Suckling has something much better to offer. Indeed, his analyses are often so acute and sensitive that one is left wondering how so clear a perception of excellence can go hand in hand with so much sheer prejudice. Of Fauré's later chamber works, for instance, he writes:

> Their opening movements are vigorous without protestation, their finales joyous without effervescence; and the intervening andantes in particular distil an atmosphere of peaceful intensity, where every vibration is significant without being insistent, by means of a sensitiveness of the "mind's ear" which renders each turn of the melodic line more telling on account of the harmonies associated with it.

This is admirably just, and it is only one of many passages equally illuminating.

Although, viewed as a contribution to the comparative criticism of music, this book is too ill-balanced to be of much value, lovers of French music, and of Fauré's in particular, will find it worth their perusal. Most usefully, it contains a catalogue (complete with dates) of Fauré's works—a felt need not supplied, as yet, by Grove.

LIONEL CRANFIELD

THE COLONIES TO-DAY

An African Survey: 2nd edition. By LORD HAILEY, G.C.M.G. *O.U.P.* 35s.

Calabar: The Church of Scotland Mission, 1846-1946. By DONALD M. MCFARLAN, M.A. *Nelson.* 6s.

Africa Advancing: A Study of Rural Education and Agriculture in West Africa and the Belgian Congo. By JACKSON DAVIS, THOS. M. CAMPBELL and MARGARET WRONG. *Friendship Press,* New York. Copies from International Committee on Christian Literature, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W.1.

I happened to be about the Colonial Office on the latest Parliamentary supply day and observed that every department was keyed up to meet points and answer questions—which no one raised or asked. It is in every way unfortunate that as usual so little emerged from the debate. The actual state of affairs needs to be known—at once to satisfy opinion in the Colonies and to stimulate a sense of responsibility at home. Incidentally our international reputation is often undeservedly besmirched because of our incurable reticence. There is just ground for complaint against Labour Ministers, not because they have worked no visible revolution in policy but for their failure to make the administration (which has antediluvian ideas on this subject) see that more intelligent publicity is necessary to give its hard work any hope of success.

The fact is that Labour Ministers found the Colonial Office wrestling manfully, as it still is, with the very substantial change of policy initiated by the Coalition six years ago. The Development and Welfare Act of 1940, much strengthened by the second Act of 1945, has got the Office itself, and most Colonial Governments, toiling away at five- or ten-year plans for the spending of money already voted. This work is inevitably for the most part office work; good plans take time to prepare. By the fixed tradition of the Office, however, if not by actual rule, there is no question of courting publicity till planning matures into positive action; not only is there nothing final or definitive to report, but plans still under discussion pass from hand to hand in confidential if not in secret files.

The Act of 1940 also very rightly initiated a great project of Colonial research. This has proceeded largely on lines indicated as necessary in Lord Hailey's monumental and authoritative *African Survey*, now reissued. Heavy responsibility clearly rests on the Central Research Committee and the specialist sub-committees which now manage the disbursement or expenditure of the Colonial Research Fund. One obvious danger to be guarded against is that matters of vital public interest, already subject to handling with bureaucratic aloofness, be further withdrawn into the academic seclusion of study or laboratory. Official sponsoring of this research creates an unhealthy atmosphere—official secrets enhance the self-importance of those who are "in" on them in its conduct; this may put a premium on inexperience trained in the right school, at the expense of original experience gained by work well done in distant fields. It is surprising, and argues that the approach from some directions is rather "set," that the *African Survey*, welcome in itself, reappears after eight years with only the addition of two words—"second edition."

All this handling of their affairs by experts leaves the Colonial peoples in particular far too much in the dark about what is afoot. It is for want of hard facts to bite on—and the facts are indescribably hard—that local African papers are full of loose political talk about self-government, while skating very lightly indeed over the most intractable social matters any sort of government of their own would have to grapple with. The overhanging veil of mystery must somehow be rent if it cannot be lifted. It is disastrous, and unfair, that all these increasingly self-conscious peoples have so much excuse for evading their own baffling problems.

For their consideration, and that too of people at home who either need reminding of their inescapable share of responsibility or else underrate the difficulty of making speed, I would commend the Rev. D. M. McFarlan's plain, unvarnished tale of a century of work by the Scottish Mission in the Nigerian Province of Calabar. This mission was very remarkably due, in the decade of the Scottish Disruption, to the efforts of the Presbytery of Jamaica, led by a stalwart Dubliner, Hope Waddell—and some readers may yet be inclined to echo an old Jamaica woman's exclamation after three years'

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The book has a pleasant strain of humour which should disarm any who, knowing little about missions, merely view their work with distrust. The hard realities of African life commonly take charge and make some serious effort to civilise the society as a whole a large and indispensable element in the design of evangelizing its individuals.

Calabar, for example, which was formerly comparatively more accessible by sea than it is now by rail or motor, is by virtue of its great waterway, the Cross River, an obvious economic unit. But last century Efik "kings," who were rather of the order of merchant princes, were able to lord it only in the estuary, while up-stream Aro raiders and ju-ju manipulators kept the neighbouring Ibibio and Ibo tribes under a reign of terror. Many of the Efik traders, characteristically, had the wit to welcome the help of European teachers in making the enforced transition from slave-trading to traffic in palm-oil—though as Hope Waddell early noted: "Disinterested benevolence is not a heathen virtue." At any rate the good modern standing of Calabar is a missionary achievement. For its first 50 years the mission not only educated, but grappled quite alone alike with malaria, leprosy or yaws, and with terrifying superstitions. Mary Slessor's struggle against twin-baby murder is well known—not so the continuing battle to put a stop to the cult of human sacrifice, which still makes the death of any prominent chief an occasion of terror for all in or about his place of demise almost anywhere on that West Coast.

This Calabar is still a fair sample not only of the trading morals of the Coast, but also of its superstitions, in part glossed over but never extinguished. Startling revelations lately shook the progressive Gold Coast. It was notorious at the time, 1943, that the so-called "funeral custom" observed on the demise of that ablest and most enlightened of West African chiefs, the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta, had the people and especially outsiders in his district going in fear of their lives. The climax came later, with the conviction of eight men for the actual ritual murder of a petty chief. It was the grim aspect of this case that these eight were men of some education and social standing who, trading on the superstitions of their fellows, used this chance to rid themselves of an inconvenient rival. But there was a brighter side, too. It was an African jury that convicted and (I was on the spot to observe this) African public opinion in and about that crowded court was, as a whole, for the newer law and order.

I conclude that the establishment of civilised order in Africa requires a steady continuance of European guidance and help, and commend in this connection another missionary document, the report of a small commission led by a wise and experienced educationist of the Rockefeller Foundation, Mr. Jackson Davis. It is significant, and comforting, to hear this American judgment that "free" Liberia makes poor showing just because it has to do without the trained civil servants, "always men of integrity and usually men of high ability," to whose "far-sighted plans . . . much of the social progress of the Gold Coast and Nigeria has been due." It is clearly also awareness of American plans of development which prompts a concluding warning that "commercial interests will not wait for idealists to determine what is best or most desirable." More immediately, the Report cites instance after instance of effective co-operation, usually mission inspired, of voluntary groups of Africans and unofficial Europeans with Government departments. This is much to be encouraged. Gold Coast education, I would testify, is in promising state just because the Department has shown unusual talent for maintaining such unofficial "contacts": officials elsewhere, especially in medical and technical branches, might usefully take note. The future of Development and Welfare depends on humanising its administration and, above all, on setting out at once to popularise both findings and projects. With any real encouragement more unofficial Europeans, many of them men with intimate knowledge of the people and of local conditions, could usefully be called into counsel. The need for research, finally, must not be used as a brake. It is never to be forgotten that there is work enough to go on with in the colonies in making systematic application of research whose known results are an established part of our common stock of knowledge.

W. M. MACMILLAN

CATS

A Treasury of Cat Stories. Compiled by ERA ZISTEL. *Hammond.* 9s. 6d.

A Clowder of Cats. By W. S. SCOTT. *Westhouse.* 8s. 6d.

These books are for cat-lovers—or perhaps it would be safer to say, for those who appreciate cats and cattish conduct. For the true cat-lover is a special being, as he never hesitates to remind you whenever there is a cat in the offing. He and cats enjoy a mutual sympathy and understanding. He can't resist a cat and no cat can resist him; and that is why your cat has to twine round his legs with arched back, heart-melting purr and anticipatory grin. There is a modicum of truth in this conviction of true cat-lovers. Cats do understand these special beings only too well; they have got them taped. Your cat knows that he has only to continue with his hackneyed proceedings for a minute and a half and a flake of salmon will be irresistibly sucked from the forbidden plate above to the floor below by means of this heaven-sent intermediary. But if you say so to the true cat-lover you will only receive a superior smile. You don't really love cats, as he does, so you can never expect their true love in return. Therefore, I doubt if these books will please the cat-lovers, because they are not manuals of cat-worship but compendiums of cattiness.

Miss Era Zistel in her preface to *A Treasury of Cat Stories* reveals herself, however, as a wistful cat-lover. "Quite definitely and irrevocably, they don't love me," she says. "And yet. . . ." And yet her own contribution to her Treasury is the biography of a cat who did love its mistress and even committed suicide when its love was not reciprocated. Among a very wide range of excellent stories it is the only one which demands the credulity of a cat-lover before you can believe it. Indeed, it could stand as a perfect illustration of the anthropomorphic fallacy that besets these cat-lovers: the belief that cats are more than human. Cats are definitely inhuman; and we appreciate their behaviour by contrast with our own. They have no communal feelings, no sense of sin, no ambitions and no conception of work—and no wonder we admire them and envy them. (When they do exhibit an emotion with which we have some acquaintance, as in teasing a mouse to death, most of us become profoundly uneasy.) Miss Zistel, for all her cat-love, has compiled a varied selection of these delightfully inhuman brutes. Her menagerie includes a Spanish cat, a Hungarian cat, a sea-faring cat, Tobermory of course, the indiscreet cat, a bewitched cat, a *doppel-gänger* cat, wild cats that were tamed, tame cats that went wild, distinguished cats and slum cats, cat heroes and heroines, cat villains, even a murderer cat. If I should single one story out for praise, it would be *The Cat and The Cobra*, by E. W. Smith, a dramatic account of the reinstatement of the Senior Cat in a Calcutta warehouse. But the palm for style undoubtedly

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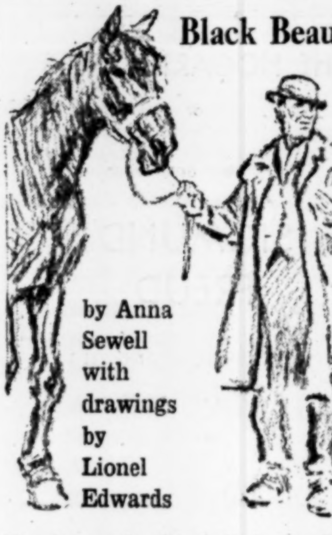

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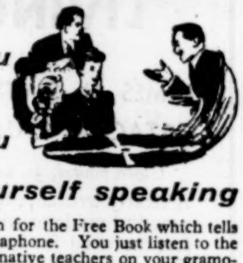

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goes to Hilaire Belloc for his *Conversation with a Cat*.

A Clowder of Cats is a beautifully printed pocket anthology of cats in prose and poetry down the ages, from Herodotus to Old Mother Tabbyskins. Mr. Scott has gathered much from the eighteenth century, when elegance and individualism, of which the cat is a singular exponent, were in their hey-day. This section of his book concludes appropriately with the noblest panegyric on the cat in the English language, Christopher Smart's description of his cat Jeoffry. But there are plenty of other cats, proverbial cats, nonsense cats, Jeremy Bentham's cat, the ecclesiastical cat of Llangollen, miscellaneous cats of all sorts. Not a cat missing that I can see. I was particularly pleased to come across an anonymous author's tilt at cat-lovers.

> When food mysteriously goes
> The chances are that Pussy knows
> More than she leads you to suppose.
> And hence there is no need for you
> If Puss declines a meal or two
> To feel her pulse or make ado.

The whimsical illustrations are by Mr. Edwin Smith, the so-called Raphael of the Cats; but I prefer to look at a cat any day.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE ECONOMISTS ON WAR AND PEACE

The Problem of War in Nineteenth Century Economic Thought. By EDMUND SILBERNER. *Oxford and Princeton University Presses.* 20s.

In this book a French economist, Professor Silberner, has gathered together what the leading French, British and German economists of the nineteenth century had to say about the problem of war. One knows well what most of them would say. The economists of the various "liberal" schools can be relied on to uphold the claims of free trade as a means of preventing war by binding the peoples of the earth together with bonds of mutual interest. The German "historical school," or at any rate most of its exponents, can be expected to argue that war is less black than it has been painted, and can be fully justifiable, just as economic protection can, when it serves the interests of a more advanced nation against a less advanced. The Socialists can be looked to for the contention that war is a product of the "contradictions of capitalism," or at all events of the machinations of predatory capitalist classes against the interests of the peoples. Liberals and Socialists will agree in looking forward to a coming utopia from which war will have been banished; whereas the German historicals will be divided into those who regard war as an institution permanently necessary to men and those who anticipate its final disappearance when the world has been unified by conquest under a single dominion. The Socialists, too, may be expected to divide themselves into utopians and revolutionaries—the one group thinking in terms of a moral reformation that will end both war and capitalist exploitation, and the other of a classless society of which the advent may be the aftermath of world war turned in its latter stages into world revolution.

These simple anticipations are for the most part fulfilled by Professor Silberner's study of the actual texts, though not a few of the leading economists have very little to say about the whole matter, and a few refuse to fall into the simple classification of the leading schools—for example, Friedrich List, who never does fit into anybody's scheme of classification. Yet others, though important, are not allowed to say their several pieces. Saint Simon, Fourier and Owen are discussed, as well as Marx and Engels; but P. J. Proudhon and the entire Anarchist school are left out. So is Sismondi, though he is barely mentioned as among the first to discuss the effect of war in engendering economic crises—not quite the first, for Malthus, in his later work, had a good many interesting observations on that problem.

The general result of Professor Silberner's gleanings is not very interesting, largely because hardly any of the writers he studies were dealing directly and thoroughly with the problem of war. For many, if not for most of them, it was simply one of the evils that would immediately vanish if the world's affairs were properly organised; and they were apt merely to include it in a list of such evils without any enquiry into its specific nature. The earlier of them, one is not surprised to find, regarded the destructive effects of war much more lightly than the later, who were beginning—but only beginning—to grasp the potentialities of total war. How imperfectly they did grasp them is shown, for example, by the belief of Engels—something of a military expert—that the weapons of war had reached the highest possible point of development in the Franco-Prussian conflict of 1870. The other interesting point that emerges is that, in the hey-day of liberalism, most of the liberal economists held it to be quite unnecessary to create any international organisation, either for the prevention of war or for any other purposes, because the coming triumph of Free Trade could be relied on to accomplish everything that was needed without any international machinery. The Socialists, naturally, took quite a different line, and were, from Saint Simon onwards, the chief protagonists of the idea of international government and planning—especially of large-scale international planning for the development of backward countries and the binding together of the peoples by strong economic as well as political machinery.

G. D. H. COLE

Federalism and Regionalism in Germany. By ARNOLD BRECHT. *Oxford University Press.* 18s.

This is not just another book about "the German problem." Dr. Brecht who teaches now at an American University, was formerly the Prussian representative in the German *Reichsrat*. He is one of those rare officials who combines wide administrative experience with a profound grasp of the theoretical implications of State practice. Moreover, the present book testifies that he has given much thought to comparative politics. The introductory pages to this study of German federalism since 1900 give a brilliant though unfortunately too short comparison between American and German federal structures.

Dr. Brecht writes with precision and detachment in the tradition of the great American and English lawyers. His book should be pondered by all those who are now called upon to lay the foundations of a new federal Germany.

Week-end Competitions

No. 866

Set by Maurice Cassel

The usual prizes are offered for imaginary conversations between namesakes, for example Groucho Marx and Karl Marx, S. (Erewhon) Butler and S. (Hudibras) Butler, or even Oscar Wilde and Jonathan Wild, Jane Austen and Alfred Austin, Edmund Spenser and Herbert Spencer. Limit 200 words. Entries by October 1st.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 863

Set by Hilary St. George Saunders

The usual prizes are offered for mottoes suitable for sundials standing in the gardens of a pre-fab house, a public house, a black marketeer's house, an author's house.

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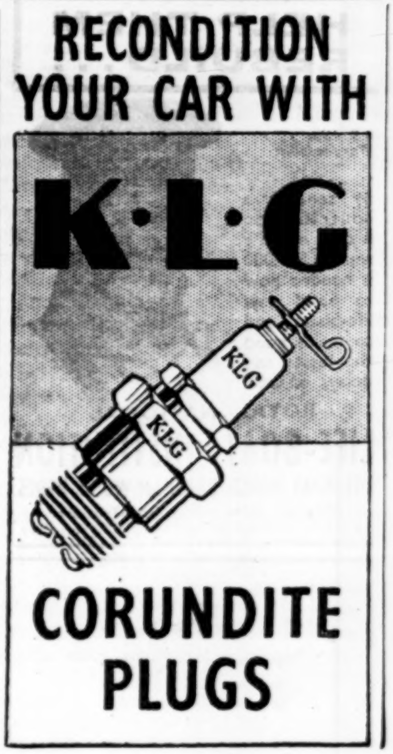

RECONDITION YOUR CAR WITH
K·L·G
CORUNDITE PLUGS

Coming back
HANOVIA

Earlier this year we announced here that manufacture of "Homesun" ultra-violet sun lamps was being suspended.
We are now making plans to alter this position. You may soon begin to see "Homesun" lamps re-appearing in retail shops. Quantities will be very restricted, and all lamps available are allocated to retailers, so (unless you are already using a "Homesun") it will pay you to keep in touch with your local suppliers No increase in price.

HANOVIA L^TD
SLOUGH
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